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**THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF
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(BAMPTON LECTURES, 1920)

HISTORY, AUTHORITY, AND
THEOLOGY

ST. PAUL AND CHRISTIANITY

THE MIRACLES OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT

THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS THE CHRIST

BY THE

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THE
LIFE AND TEACHING
OF
JESUS THE CHRIST

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PREFACE

THIS work is a fragment of a larger design on which I have been engaged for nearly ten years, and is devoted to one particular problem—namely, the general credibility of the traditional account of the life and work of our Lord.

There are widely prevalent at the present time two schools of criticism, which would deny to a greater or less degree this credibility. The one which prevails somewhat largely, I believe, in America, denies entirely the historical character of the Founder of Christianity, and seeks the origin of the Christian religion exclusively in myths and tendencies. These theories in this extreme form have never received the assent of competent scholars, and need hardly be treated seriously; in any case, if there is any value at all in the investigations contained in this volume they may certainly be dismissed. The second demands more serious consideration. It maintains that, although we may accept as certain the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was a real person and the Founder of the Christian religion, and may accept also some portion of what is narrated about Him, yet we must also recognize that the greater part of the contents of the Gospel tells us not what He taught, but what the Christian Church which grew up after His death thought.

It is with this school that I am mainly concerned; for in one form or another it prevails widely, and its teaching is accepted by many whose learning and reputation give them some authority to speak. It is true that when we examine the matter a little more closely this authority seems a little less strong, for although there is an agreement that a large part of the Gospel is not authentic, there is not the same agreement as to what that is. When we ask what is the original and historical nucleus, we find the

greatest variety of opinion. Some would have us accept a purely ethical Gospel, others would lay the greatest stress on the expectation of a world catastrophe which made ethical considerations of very slight importance; some would allow that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, others would ascribe that opinion to a blunder of the Apostles. And when we turn to the particular narratives, we find the same diversity of opinion. In fact, it becomes clear that behind this negative criticism there is no scientific method to give certain or even probable results.

It is against theories such as these that the argument of this book is directed. I have aimed, in the first place, at showing that, accepting the results of modern criticism, there is every reason to think that the subject-matter of the first three Gospels represents the traditions about the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth as they were current in the earliest years of the Christian Church. Then, secondly, that it harmonizes with all that we know of the times when Jesus lived and the environment in which He taught. Thirdly, that the teaching of Jesus is harmonious throughout, natural in its language and form to the circumstances and representing a unity of thought transcending anything that had existed before. And then, fourthly, that the life as narrated forms a consistent whole. The result of these investigations is to satisfy myself, at any rate, that we have a trustworthy account of the life and teaching of Jesus. It is undeniably fragmentary. There is the difficulty which we find in all study of past history of reconstructing the way in which things happened. No claim to infallibility or inerrancy is possible. But, so far as I am personally concerned, I feel that we have good and trustworthy material on which to work. Whether I have sufficient grounds for such a conclusion I must leave to my readers to judge.

This book was begun in the most thrilling days of the Great War, at a time when the British Army was advancing from Egypt to Palestine, when the scenes and places which had so often played a great part in history were daily mentioned in the despatches of our army, when the great maritime road saw once more the advance of an armed host,

when Gaza was once more besieged, and Jerusalem taken, and Jericho again fell; when at Megiddo a world conflict was once more decided, and English and Australian cavalry fought where Coeur de Lion had fought, traversed the plain of Esdraelon, and rode through the streets of Nazareth and past the Sea of Galilee on the great advance to Damascus, Peace has not brought all that we hoped for in the exhilaration of victory, but we may pray that the hills and valleys where Jesus lived and taught, and His peaceful home at Nazareth, and the beautiful shores and waters of the Sea of Galilee, and Capernaum, and Bethsaida, and Caesarea of sacred memory, may never again be brought under the blighting influence of Turkish and Mohammedan rule.

It remains to say that a considerable part of this book was delivered as lectures, first in the University of Oxford and then in King's College, London. I have not thought it necessary to alter the signs of their origin. The personal touch which should never be absent from a lecture will, I hope, be felt to be not out of place. Too great formalism does not suit a biography which cannot aim at completeness and can only paint aspects of a life which in its reality is beyond our full comprehension.

I must express my thanks to my friend Dr. C. H. Turner for reading the whole book through before it was put into type, and for much acute and helpful criticism, to Dr. Burney for reading the first proofs, and to the Rev. R. G. Plumptre for the final revision. My wife has again assisted me in the index.

ARTHUR C. HEADLAM.

CHRIST CHURCH,
OXFORD.

September, 1922.

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JESUS LIVED AND TAUGHT
AND DIED.

THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS THE CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE

IT is the aim of this work to give some account of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of Christianity. Such a task may be held to be both unnecessary and presumptuous. It may be pointed out that we have four original books, accessible to all, written by those who were either themselves witnesses of what they described or had lived in the closest intimacy with those who were, that these contain an inimitable account of the life of Jesus, and that nothing can supersede or even supplement them. Every reader has all that can be known before him, and no one can add to or increase our knowledge.

Of course, fundamentally, that contention is true. No one can supersede the four Gospels, and no one wishes to do so. But two grave reasons make a work such as the present one not unnecessary. It is well known that an imposing amount of learned criticism has appeared which has cast grave doubts on the credibility of, at any rate, a portion of these accounts, and there is a natural demand for some estimate of the value of this criticism. And then, also, the documents in question are all of them of a fragmentary character. They were written more than eighteen hundred years ago. The environment in which the life of Jesus was lived is unknown to those who have not studied it. The language and thought of that day were different from our own. Much may be learnt by combining and comparing the various accounts, and interpreting them in the light of all the knowledge that we can accumulate. The Gospels

need translation for us, not only in language, but in thought.

If this be so, I think the presumption may be excused, provided that we are prepared to approach our task with fitting humility and reverence. Many others have made the same attempt, and the works that they have produced may be to us both a warning and an encouragement—an encouragement, because I suppose that there is not one of them from which we may not learn something; a warning, because there is not one the inadequacy and imperfection of which is not apparent. They have each served their time in their circle and have passed away. What we may hope is that, if our spirit be right, we too may render some service to our own generation.¹

The first duty of anyone who would write a biography is to estimate the extent and value of his authorities. The authorities for the life of Jesus are twofold—primary and secondary. The primary are the four Gospels; to the examination of these the main part of our task must be directed. The secondary are somewhat varied, and, so far as regards the life of Jesus Himself, most fragmentary. They include such information as may be elicited from Josephus,² from Greek and Roman authors and from Jewish tradition.³ Then there are the extra-canonical and apocryphal records of our Lord's life, and such sayings ascribed to Him as have been preserved by Christian tradition.⁴ More important than these for our estimation of Jesus is the evidence afforded by the opinions held about Him and the character of His influence in the Early Church. If we desire to know

¹ The most brilliant account of the attempts to write the life of Christ is that contained in *Von Reimarus zu Wrede, Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, by Albert Schweitzer (Tübingen, 1906), translated into English, under the title of *The Quest of the Historical Christ*, by W. M. Montgomery, with a preface by F. C. Burkitt.

² On Josephus, see Schürer, *Geschichte* (third and fourth editions), i., pp. 77 ff, 544 ff.

³ On Jewish tradition, see R. T. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, London, 1903.

⁴ See, on the extra-canonical sayings of Jesus, Alfred Resch, *Agrapha in Texte und Untersuchungen*, Neue Folge, vol. xv., 3, 4; Lock and Sanday, *Two Lectures on the "Sayings of Jesus,"* Oxford, 1897.

what manner of person a man may be, we ask not only what he has done and said, but also what people with whom he came in contact thought of him, what impression he made on his own generation, and what influence he left behind him in the world. All these are important elements in the final picture that we can construct. So it is with Jesus. The Apostolic Church must be accounted for. Not only what it recorded of Him, not only what it thought of Him, although both these are of fundamental importance, but also the fact that it existed. The Christian Church is the great witness to its Founder; and no life of Christ which fails to account for Christianity can be adequate.

To all this we must add the picture that we are able to form of the circumstances in which Jesus lived. To paint that picture needs a full acquaintance with the life and literature of the times; and it is certainly remarkable that He should have lived in the great days of the Roman Empire—a period in the history of the ancient world when from literary remains, from inscriptions, from antiquities, and from the fact that that Empire summed up in a remarkable way the history of the past, our knowledge is so ample. Let us remember, also, that for studying the contemporary life and thought of Judaism we have a rich store of material which is only gradually becoming known. We have the books of Josephus; we have the great body of apocryphal and pseudonymous Jewish literature,¹ on which so much has been done in recent years and particularly in Oxford; we have the works of Philo; and we have the Jewish tradition embodied in the Targums, the Mishna, and the rest of the Talmud, the Midrash and later literature.² In all these directions there is full opportunity for research and discovery, and there is still much to be learned towards illustrating, directly or indirectly, the life of Jesus.

¹ This has been collected together for English readers in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, edited by R. H. Charles (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913).

² The fullest information on all these points may be found in Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, third and fourth editions (Leipzig, 1898-1907). There is an English translation of an earlier edition.

I

We turn now to our primary authorities, the four Gospels, and the criticism of them which has grown up in the last hundred and fifty years.

Let me begin by saying one word about what we mean by "criticism," or, as it is often called, to distinguish it from textual criticism, "higher criticism," and what is its purpose. It is sometimes spoken of as if it were in itself wrong and dangerous. It is, of course, nothing of the sort. It means the application of everything that we know of the history of a document—external criticism—and of everything that we can learn by an examination of its contents—internal criticism—towards discovering as much as possible about its origin, its authorship, and its historical value. There is no more fascinating question that we can ask than this: How did the Gospels grow up? Under what circumstances were they written? There is no more important question that we can ask than whether they contain true history. These are the two main questions with which critics of the New Testament are concerned, and it must be recognized that not only in regard to our study of the life of Jesus, but also in relation to the foundation of Christian doctrine and life, they are of transcendent importance.

But how far is criticism equal to the task? Let me give you an instance of this higher criticism. You know that Sir Walter Scott originally published the *Waverley Novels* anonymously, that they were an extraordinary success, and that naturally the question who was their author roused the greatest interest. Now Scott was already well known as a poet, the author of vigorous and romantic poems dealing with Scottish history, and an able and ingenious work was written proving that Scott, the author of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and the *Lady of the Lake*, was also the author of *Waverley*. The writer examined the external circumstances, the style, the subject-matter, the personal tastes and interests of the two authors, and showed strong grounds for believing that they were the same person.¹ Here we

¹ See *Letters to Richard Heber, Esq., containing Critical Remarks on the Series of Novels beginning with "Waverley," and an Attempt to ascertain its Author* (London, 1821). The author was John Ley-

have an instance of a careful and intelligent higher criticism which was found to be correct. The same methods have been pursued in many varied fields of literature, often in a way to carry conviction. The problems of the New Testament are for many reasons peculiarly difficult, since the literature is unique in character, but there is no reason for doubting that a careful and painstaking enquiry may ultimately teach us a good deal about the composition of the documents of which it is made up.

With this amount of preface let me turn to the Gospels, and attempt to put before you, so far as I can, what appear to me to be the assured results of criticism as applied to them. I cannot hope to give you anything original, but it is necessary that, as an introduction to the study of our Lord's life, our critical attitude should be defined.¹

It is well known that the four Gospels may be divided into two groups. The first three—those known as St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke—have marked resemblances to one another and certain marked differences from St. John, and, because they give a common picture of our Lord's life, are known as the Synoptic Gospels. If you read them carefully you cannot help noticing that they have a large amount of matter in common, but that each also has its own special features. It is the need for explaining these resemblances and differences which forms what is called the Synoptic problem, and on this an imposing amount of thought and work has been expended during the last century and a half.

In particular let us remember that much able and scientific work has been produced in Oxford, under the inspiration of the late Dr. Sanday. Many of the contributions thus made are of real value, and in particular the researches of Sir John

cester Adolphus of St. John's College, Oxford (see *Dictionary of National Biography*, *sub voc.*). The work is referred to favourably in the Introduction to the *Fortunes of Nigel*.

¹ The best single work to which the reader may be referred is, I think, Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents* (Cambridge The University Press, 1903-1920). A very full account of opinion on the subject will be found in Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1911).

Hawkins have been accepted in the world of scholars as of supreme importance in establishing results which may be considered certain.¹ They are patient, cautious, and methodical. They attack a problem limited in scope with completeness, and within the sphere outlined arrive at conclusions which have been accepted. "It is impossible," writes Professor von Harnack, "to overrate Hawkins."

As I do not wish to go over ground which has been sufficiently worked, it will be enough to state shortly what may be considered to be agreed on as to the composition of the first three Gospels. Let me take the summary given us by Dr. Stanton.² It may be recognized, he says, that the resemblances between the three Synoptic Gospels are so great as to imply a common Greek source, and greater than can be explained by the influence of oral tradition. Neither did St. Matthew make regular use of St. Luke, nor St. Luke of St. Matthew; they are almost if not completely independent of one another. It is, moreover, almost universally agreed that either St. Mark's Gospel or a work virtually identical with it was used by the First and Third Evangelists. It is further agreed that they had a second common source which contained a record of the words of Jesus. This is by many writers called "Q," a designation selected as quite neutral, and not implying any theory. It is the initial letter of the German word *Quelle*, which means "source." I propose to call it *The Discourses*. The practical result is that we must accept the priority of St. Mark's Gospel and recognize that it was used by St. Matthew and St. Luke, and that there was also a second early source common to these two Gospels.

I do not think that I need labour the arguments which have convinced critics of the priority of St. Mark.³ Anyone

¹ See *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, by Members of the University of Oxford, edited by W. Sanday (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), and *Horæ Synopticae*, by the Rev. Sir John C. Hawkins, Bart., second edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).

² See Stanton, *op. cit.*, ii., chap. i., pp. 1-60.

³ It may be convenient to state here that I use the names St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John without committing myself to any opinion as to the correctness of the traditional attribution.

who will can test the matter for himself. Let him compare the three Gospels together, and he will find that the greater part of St. Mark is contained in the other two Gospels, and for the most part in the same order; and that while St. Matthew and St. Luke—especially St. Matthew—occasionally differ from the Marcan order, they never agree in their differences. Further, let him compare the individual narratives together. He will see that whereas St. Matthew and St. Mark agree together against St. Luke, and St. Luke and St. Mark agree together against St. Matthew, it rarely happens that St. Matthew and St. Luke agree together against St. Mark in these common narratives, and hardly ever in any important point.¹ The reason for believing in a second common source is that if we eliminate from St. Matthew and St. Luke all the matter they share with St. Mark, there is still a considerable amount that they have in common with one another, and the resemblances are in many cases so close as to demand that this common source should be literary.

Only on one point may it be considered that there is still room for some difference of opinion. St. Luke omits a considerable portion of St. Mark, and it has been held (as, for example, by Dr. Stanton) that he had before him an earlier edition of that Gospel which omitted certain passages which might be held to be interpolations.² But I think that the arguments on the other side, given by Sir John Hawkins, are fairly conclusive.³ They are first of all the unity of style exhibited by the whole of the second Gospel, and, secondly, the fact that adequate reasons harmonizing with the literary habits of St. Luke may be found for his omission of these sections. St. Luke is careful to avoid repetitions; and it will be found that generally, when he omits matter contained in St. Mark, it is because it appears to be a repetition of what occurs elsewhere in his Gospel.

¹ The most recent discussion on this point will be found in *The Study of the New Testament*, 1883 and 1920, by Cuthbert H. Turner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p. 36.

² Stanton, *op. cit.*, pp. 150 ff.

³ Hawkins, *Three Limitations to St. Luke's Use of St. Mark's Gospel in Horae Synopticae*, pp. 29-94.

There are one or two other literary habits of his which also influence him, such as the adapting of his Gospel to the needs of his Gentile readers, and consequently the omission or curtailment of what would not concern them—for instance, detailed references to Jewish customs and the Jewish law. Personally I am fairly certain that St. Luke had our St. Mark before him pretty much as we have it.

II

Our first business, then, will be to find out all that we can know about St. Mark's Gospel.

To begin with, it is a literary unit. It is a book with a style of its own, and is not a compilation, and this style is found throughout the whole Gospel. This unity, of course, does not mean that the author may not have had sources out of which he constructed his work, just as the other Gospels had, but it does, I think, mean that we should have a good deal of difficulty in discovering them. This point we shall discuss later. Again, this unity is quite compatible with some clumsiness of construction. Not all writers are very skilful at constructing a book. What is implied, I think, is that the author had a definite purpose before him which he carried out fairly consistently, and that he had a clear conception of the work and life of our Lord.

I would ask you now to study with care the life of Jesus as presented in this Gospel, and to assist you in doing that I would refer to a brilliant exposition of it by Dr. Burkitt in his book on *The Gospel History and its Transmission*.¹ He discusses the two questions: "Does the story of Jesus Christ, as given by St. Mark, approve itself as an adequate historical outline of the main events?" and "Does the story of Jesus Christ fit into general history?" To both questions he gives an affirmative answer, and he gives, as I think, adequate grounds for doing so.

He points out how the Gospel begins by describing the impression which the preaching of Jesus first made: His power, His authority, and His popularity. Then comes

¹ *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, by F. Crawford Burkitt (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1906), pp. 65-104.

the early opposition from the constitutional authorities, and for a time we have on the one side a growing popularity, on the other an increasing opposition. The result is a breach with the synagogue. That naturally leads to the organization of the new community apart from official Judaism. At first Jesus preaches in the synagogues; later we find that He does not do so except on one occasion at Nazareth. So He chooses His apostles, the first step in the organization of the Christian Church. The second result is more serious. John had been beheaded, and Herod Antipas learns about Jesus. That means that henceforth His life is in danger. But His work is not accomplished; His time has not yet come; a prophet cannot perish except in Jerusalem. So Jesus for a time avoids danger. The next period of ministry is one of retirement, and, as seems probable, the private instruction of His disciples. The district which is dangerous for Jesus is the territory of Herod Antipas. So we find Him at Bethsaida, or travelling in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, or at Caesarea Philippi, or in the Decapolis. It is a period of retreat. Its culmination is the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi. Then comes the final journey to Jerusalem with the conscious expectation of the end.

We shall work out this in greater detail when we come to our history. I have only sketched it here, as it bears on the historical character of St. Mark. That Gospel gives, as I believe, a coherent and intelligible, but by no means a complete, account of our Lord's ministry, and one which harmonizes with the political circumstances of the time. It has the appearance of being authentic history. That is the point for which Professor Burkitt contends, and I believe that his contention is sound.

And now I will ask you to turn to what we can learn from external sources about the Gospel. We have a well-known statement of the early Christian writer Papias, who lived in the first half of the second century, often quoted and often commented on:

“Mark having become the interpreter of Peter wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without, however, recording in order what was said or done by Christ.

For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said, attended Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses. So then Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement thereon."¹

Apart from the criticisms which were, perhaps, intended to contrast St. Mark with the systematic account of our Lord's teaching given by St. Matthew, and the chronological framework of Jewish feasts given by St. John, the important point that we learn from this is that the Gospel was written by St. Mark, and that it gives us, so far as the writer remembered them, the substance of St. Peter's instructions on the life of our Lord.

To this we may add a statement of Irenaeus, who lived in the latter half of the second century, that after the death of Peter and Paul, "Mark, who was the disciple and interpreter of Peter [whose knowledge of Greek it is implied had been imperfect], handed down to us in writing the preaching of Peter."²

Now if our analysis of the character of the Gospel be correct, this external tradition fits in admirably with the internal evidence. If the history gives a coherent account of our Lord's life, it must come from a good authority, and all the more as it is probable that the history is much better than the author realized. It is doubtful, it seems to me, whether he understood what was implied in the order of events as he narrated them, and this may, perhaps, explain the few narratives which do not cohere with the general scheme. The point is that there was behind St. Mark an authentic account of the life of Jesus, narrated by one who had himself taken part in it, and therefore giving material from which we can construct a coherent story.

Nor is this all. Many of the narratives seem to me to

¹ The fragment is given by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii., 39, 15. I have used the translation given by Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 529.

² Irenaeus, *Adv. Haereses*, iii., 1, 2.

show traces of their actual origin. At the beginning of the Gospel we have given us what seems to be an account of an actual day at Capernaum, with notes of times appended. The call of the disciples, the preaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, the cure of the sick and those possessed with devils "at even, when the sun was set," the retirement of Jesus into solitude to pray "in the morning a great while before day," the anxiety of Simon that He should respond to the demand of the people, and the journey through Galilee—all these follow one another in a natural and orderly sequence. Surely we have it all given thus clearly, because it was the memory of the greatest day in Peter's life. It was the day when his discipleship had begun. Again and again he must have told the story, and the vividness of the impression would never fade. Many years afterwards, when in distant Rome his life's work was coming to its end, he would look back to that great day by the Sea of Galilee, when the call had come and the response been made—a day of such infinite importance in his own life and in the Gospel history. Surely no mere power of historic imagination has given us these scenes.

Nor is this a solitary instance. If we contrast the narrative with those of St. Luke and St. Matthew, both in its general characteristics and in its details, we shall note certain marked differences. Both these other Gospels, and especially St. Matthew's, from time to time upset the chronological order of St. Mark, and in doing so spoil the coherency of the narrative. It is quite impossible out of these Gospels to construct the same succession of events. And if we compare the separate narratives as they appear in these later Gospels with those in St. Mark, we shall see how much they have lost in picturesqueness, in simplicity, and in a sort of photographic accuracy. St. Mark seems to have written down the stories as they appeared to one who had seen them. Just the touches which convey that impression are often omitted in the other Gospels. He tells us how the men that bore the paralytic could not come nigh Jesus for the crowd, and how they broke up the roof. He tells us how Jesus spake to His disciples that a little boat

should wait on Him. He gives that detailed and vivid picture of the woman with the issue of blood. He ends the story of Jairus' daughter with the command that something should be given her to eat. He tells us of the green grass, and the men sitting down by companies at the feeding of the multitude. We need not multiply instances. There are few stories in St. Mark which do not give one a vivid picture of the event, and they are generally spoiled in St. Matthew.

It is, however, maintained that much of what is said about our Lord in St. Mark is so improbable as to be inconsistent with a Petrine origin. The theory put forward as to the purpose of the parables, the story of the mission of the Twelve, the injunction of silence as to miracles—all these, it is maintained, cannot be historical. On most of these points I believe that St. Mark is right and the critics are wrong, and that will appear as our history proceeds.¹ There is, however, one difficulty to which I must refer, which seems to me to be a very real one—namely, the date of the Last Supper. According to St. Mark (and the other Synoptists) the Last Supper was a Passover. According to St. John it was a day earlier. Now it is extraordinarily difficult to believe that the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion of our Lord could have taken place on the Passover, while the indecent hurry with which all the proceedings were conducted can be well explained if the desire was to get it over before the Passover began. The date of the Last Supper given by St. Mark is, therefore, not probable. But even if this be so, I do not feel that it need conflict with the belief that the Gospel is based on Petrine sources. It is not in the least unlikely that, whatever were the real facts, the Apostolic Church should quite early have learnt to think of the Last Supper as a Passover, and this may have influenced St. Mark's narrative. It is exactly the point on which tradition might quite easily get confused.

I believe, then, that tradition is right in telling us that this Gospel is the work of St. Mark, recording the teaching of St. Peter. But was that St. Mark's only source? Can we be certain that everything in the Gospel has the authority

¹ See below, Chapter VII.

of St. Peter? I think that there are fairly good reasons for thinking that there is information in St. Mark derived from other sources. Turn to the narrative of the feeding of the four thousand. I cannot but believe that this is a doublet of the feeding of the five thousand—that is, it is another account of the same event. There is a remarkable similarity between the two stories, but that of the five thousand has all the vividness which characterizes a Marcan narrative, while that of the four thousand is singularly bald. Apart from this the two stories (except for the numbers) are almost identical. Then we notice that the second story is narrated as if there had been no similar event previous to it; and that while the first story takes its proper place in the narrative, the second story seems quite unconnected with what precedes it. If, then, as is probable, these two stories are doublets, the same will be true of the later reference to them, dealing specifically with each event. This would have arisen as a conflation of the two sources.

Now, if these two narratives are different accounts of the same event, there are three deductions which we can make. The first is, as on other grounds would be likely, that St. Mark has collected information from more than one source. The second is even more important. Here we have two independent accounts of the same event, and they differ from one another as independent accounts would, particularly as regards the numbers, on which point accuracy and agreement is rarely attainable. But essentially they tell us exactly the same story. The deduction that I would make from this is that traditions so corroborated have a reasonable right to be considered trustworthy. The third point that I would make is that whatever actually happened the tradition belongs to the oldest Gospel strata. The feeding of the multitude is found in the oldest Gospel, and the author of that Gospel gives us two independent accounts of it.

Now, if this be the case, it is reasonable to suppose that there may be other passages in St. Mark which do not come from St. Peter, and some corroboration has been found for this. In some places it is thought there are signs of ill-joining in the narrative, as if a certain number of incidents

had been inserted from other sources. One of them may, perhaps, be the eschatological discourse in the thirteenth chapter. I do not think we can go with any confidence much further than that. You will find in some books an elaborate arrangement of sources. That is, I think, for the most part mere guesswork, based on the author's preconceived notions of what the narrative should be. The utmost we can reasonably say is that we cannot in all cases feel certain that what is contained in St. Mark comes from St. Peter. There were other sources, oral or written, from which some matter is incorporated.

The Gospel of St. Mark was thus written by John Mark, the companion first of St. Paul, then of St. Peter. He was a member in early days of the Jerusalem Church. Although probably not himself a direct disciple of our Lord, he was intimately associated with those who had been. He had ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the traditions of the life of Jesus in their earliest form, and his narrative, both by its intelligent account of the progress of events and by the life-like pictures that it gives, seems to imply that it is based on such traditions. The fact that it is the principal narrative source, both of St. Matthew and St. Luke, shows that in the opinion of those writers it was by far the best available account of our Lord's life.

As to its date I am inclined, on the whole, to accept that given us by Irenaeus, that it was written after the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul—that is, after A.D. 64. I would add, not very long afterwards. It must, however, be recognized that there are no very strong reasons against a considerably earlier date. It might quite easily have been written before A.D. 60. Some difficulty has been felt about the apocalyptic passage in the thirteenth chapter. It has been maintained that it is an independent document, owing little in its present form to the words of our Lord, but composed under the influence of the fall of Jerusalem. The whole question of the apocalyptic teaching will demand treatment in detail later, but I hardly think that in any case it requires so late a date. No doubt its language may have been coloured by the troubled times which prevailed for many years before the fall of Jerusalem,

which to many seemed to be the "Woes of the Messiah," the necessary prelude, according to current Jewish expectation, of the final revelation of the Son of Man; but there is little sign of its being influenced by the specific events of that period. It presents many features in common with the general apocalyptic language of the time, and there is no reason why we should not look upon it as an instance of teaching given by our Lord in such current apocalyptic language. Tradition may have coloured the record a little, but in the main there seems no reason why we should not accept it as authentic.

III

We come next to the document often called "Q," which I propose to call *The Discourses*. This is a hypothetical document, but it must have existed in some form or other. Let us first consider the reason for requiring its existence. It is that in St. Matthew and St. Luke there is still, when we have eliminated St. Mark, a considerable amount of common matter. This is found to consist almost entirely of teaching. If a narrative occurs, it is as an occasion for teaching. The sayings of our Lord contained in this common matter are generally quite short, often of an epigrammatic or oracular character; often, too, although not always, the resemblance between the two reports is very close; sometimes they are almost verbally identical. Moreover, the sayings occur to a large extent in the same order. All these facts seem to point to a common written source.

I am now going to ask you to turn to another statement given us by that Papias to whom I have already referred. He tells us that "Matthew composed the *Logia*¹ in the Aramaic language, and each one interpreted them as he would."² These words have led to much discussion, and it is difficult to find any agreement as to their meaning. We may, to begin with, take it as reasonably certain that this

¹ The Greek word "*Logia*" means "oracles," or perhaps short oracular sayings. It was technically used to mean "the Scriptures."

² Eus., *Hist. Eccl.*, iii., 39, 16. The Greek has "in the Hebrew language," but there can be no doubt that what is meant is Aramaic, the popular language of Palestine at the time of our Lord.

tradition (whatever may have been the opinion of Papias) could not refer to our St. Matthew. That Gospel was not written in Hebrew or Aramaic, but in Greek, and was put together out of more than one Greek document. There is a good deal of hesitation among scholars in adopting any positive theory, but I cannot help thinking that there is considerable probability that this tradition refers to the collection of "discourses" or "oracles" of the Lord (that expression would be a very suitable one) which was used by St. Matthew and St. Luke. That hypothesis will explain a good many facts. It will explain how St. Matthew's Gospel obtained its name. If there was more than one translation of these discourses in existence (as Papias suggests), it will explain why, in some cases, the verses in St. Matthew and St. Luke are almost identical, and in some they differ widely. Although, for some reason or other, this identification of the common source of the two Gospels with the *Logia* or oracles of St. Matthew is not as popular as it was, I must confess that it appears to me to be the most probable hypothesis.

What were the contents of this book? If you study the many writers who have devoted themselves to the Synoptic problem, you will find a good deal of speculation on this subject. Some have included in it much that appears in only one Gospel, and have even made it a source of St. Mark. Others, like Wellhausen, depreciate it, and consider that it was largely made up out of St. Mark. These are all mere guesses. All we can say is that in all probability it contained most, if not all, the passages common to St. Matthew and St. Luke which are not in St. Mark. It is, of course, possible that there were two common sources, or that some common passages were derived directly from oral tradition. But it is a wise rule in criticism that the simplest and least complicated solution is also the most probable. On the other hand, it is fairly certain that in some cases it contained the same discourse or narrative which we have in St. Mark, in a somewhat different form; it is possible, also, that it contained some things which St. Matthew has given us, but not St. Luke; but this is less certain. Take, for example, the comparison of the Old and New Law at the beginning of the

Sermon on the Mount. It might quite well be argued that this is just what St. Luke might omit as being of little interest to Gentile readers. On the other hand, it is also possible to argue that it is just what St. Matthew might have put together from different sources as eminently useful for his Jewish Christian readers. That instance will show us the uncertainty of all such speculations. It is better to keep to what has positive argument in its support. There must have been a common source for the matter common to the first and third Gospels and those alone: there is a strong probability that this was a collection of the discourses of our Lord, and it may have been that collection said to have been made by St. Matthew.¹

There is a further point of much interest. This source contained, as we have said, matter also found in St. Mark. We know this by the occurrence of what are called doublets. That is to say, the same passage is found twice in one Gospel, because it has been derived from two different sources. A good example is our Lord's teaching about divorce. This occurs once in the Sermon on the Mount, where it seems to resemble more closely the account in St. Luke;² once later in St. Matthew, where it is clearly taken from St. Mark.³ Sometimes St. Luke gives a story in one form, St. Mark in another, and St. Matthew seems to have combined the two. For example, take the discourse on casting out devils in the name of Beelzebub.⁴ If you will compare the version in St. Mark with that in St. Luke, you will notice considerable differences, and you will see that the two versions are combined in St. Matthew. Or again, St. Mark gives us the parable of the mustard seed, St. Luke gives it in a different version and in a different context with the parable of the leaven attached. St. Matthew follows the arrangement of St. Mark, adds the parable of the leaven, and in the parable of the mustard seed shows the influence of both St. Mark

¹ The best book on *The Discourses or Logia* is Harnack, *Sprüche und Reden Jesu* (Leipzig, 1907). There is an English translation with the title *The Sayings of Jesus* (Williams and Norgate).

² Mt. v. 31, 32; cf. Lk. xvi. 18.

³ Mt. xix. 3-9; cf. Mk. x. 2-12.

⁴ Mt. xii. 22-32; Mk. iii. 22-30; Lk. xi. 14-23.

and St. Luke.¹ The deduction that we make is that it was contained both in *The Discourses* and in St. Mark, and that there was considerable verbal variation between the two reports of the parable.

An important question, therefore, arises. Did St. Mark use *The Discourses*, or *The Discourses* St. Mark, or do they give independent accounts of the same tradition? Wellhausen thinks that *The Discourses* were dependent on St. Mark, but few, I think, follow him. It is more common to hold that St. Mark used *The Discourses*. My own opinion is that he did not. If he had had it before him, and used it at all, he would probably have used much more. I cannot think that he would have left out the parable of the leaven. Moreover, when he does give us anything which is also found in *The Discourses*, there are considerable variations in his report. My own belief is that he gives an independent report of the same traditions.

If that be so, we have further instances of what we noticed in respect to the feeding of the multitude. We have independent reports of the same traditions, and we are able to compare them. They vary as reports which are independent must do; but they both give us the same teaching, and there is nothing which would compel us to think the tradition erroneous. There are occasional discrepancies. It would be unnatural if there were not; but substantially both represent the teaching of our Lord in the same way. Now, if this be so where we can compare traditions, we have a reasonable amount of certainty that it is also true in other instances where we have not the opportunity of comparing them.

We have, then, in *The Discourses* an early account of our Lord's teaching which, up to a certain point, we can reconstruct with a fair measure of certainty. It contained much information of the greatest importance. It certainly contained a considerable portion of the Sermon on the Mount, although how far that was collected in one discourse must be uncertain. It contained a long section about John the Baptist. It contained some of the parables of the kingdom. It contained some of our Lord's most striking

¹ Mt. xiii. 31-33; Mk. iv. 30-32; Lk. xiii. 18-21.

utterances. It did not contain an account of the Passion. We should be glad to have more accurate information than we possess of its date. That we unfortunately cannot obtain. It must have been earlier than St. Matthew or St. Luke. Sir William Ramsay has maintained that the absence of any reference to the Passion implied that it was composed in the lifetime of our Lord. But this is a precarious argument. If the story of the Passion was part of the ordinary Christian teaching (as seems probable), then a collection of discourses might naturally omit it. To many of us *The Discourses* have all the marks of being a very primitive document, but others consider that it bears marks of later dogmatic influence, and the arguments on either side are too subjective for us to place much reliance on them. We must be content to say that it was an early record of our Lord's teaching. That must suffice.

IV

We come next to St. Luke's Gospel. I think I may take certain things as proved about it. I see no reason for doubting the arguments by which Sir John Hawkins here and Professor von Harnack in Germany—to mention only the two most distinguished of recent writers who have discussed the question—have convinced most of us that the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were written by St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, and that, therefore, we are dealing, not with an anonymous book, but with one about whose author we have considerable knowledge.¹

As to its date some uncertainty must prevail. There are really two chronological schemes possible with regard to the Gospels. The one would put the composition of St. Mark's Gospel during the life of St. Peter, probably before the year 60. Then St. Luke would have been written before the year 64, and St. Matthew's Gospel somewhere

¹ *Horae Synopticae*, pp. 174-197; Von Harnack, *Lukas der Arzt* (Leipzig, 1906), translated under the title *Luke the Physician* (Williams and Norgate, 1907). There does not seem to me to be anything in Dr. Foakes Jackson's and Dr. Kirsopp Lake's recent volume, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. ii. (Macmillan and Co., 1922), to shake that conclusion.

about the year 70. The second scheme would place the composition of St. Mark's Gospel after the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul—that is, after the year 64—and the other two Gospels about the year 80. As all these Gospels were probably known to the author of the fourth Gospel, it is not possible to put any of them much later than that date. My own opinion, on the whole, inclines to the later date, but there are no conclusive arguments on either side.¹

There is one further point that I think I ought to mention. It has been maintained with some persistency by certain scholars that St. Luke was acquainted with the writings of Josephus. That would necessarily imply a still later date. The *Jewish Wars* was published not much before the year 79, the *Antiquities* about the year 94. I must own that this argument has never appealed to me, mainly because of the fact that St. Luke's statements are often inconsistent with those of Josephus. It demands, in fact, an almost incredible carelessness on the part of St. Luke, and that is not justified by what we know of his writings otherwise. I think it would be much more correct to argue that the reason why St. Luke has probably made some mistakes in secular history is that the works of Josephus had not yet been published. If they had been, he would have been much better able to correlate the Evangelical history with the circumstances of the time.²

I must, I think, allude also to the ingenious theory put forward recently by Dr. Streeter. He suggests that St. Luke wrote a first edition of his Gospel, probably during the period when St. Paul was in captivity in Caesarea. Then,

¹ The statement that the author of the fourth Gospel was acquainted with the Synoptists is said by Professor Schmiedel (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, ii., 2540) to need no proof. The implications of this hardly seem to be realized. The fourth Gospel can with difficulty be put later than A.D. 100. And it implies that the other three Gospels must be earlier. This rules out as impossible such a date as A.D. 115 suggested as possible for the Acts of the Apostles and the third Gospel by Dr. Kirsopp Lake and Dr. Foakes Jackson (*Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 358).

² The latest statement of the arguments in favour of the use of Josephus by St. Luke is contained in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. ii., pp. 355-358. To me the instances given prove that St. Luke had not seen Josephus's works.

at a later date, no doubt in Rome, he came across St. Mark's Gospel and combined it with the work he had already written, publishing the enlarged Gospel about the year 80. In the same way he wrote the travel diary probably before the death of St. Paul, and then, at a later date, produced the completed Acts. The point in which this theory differs from some others is that it recognizes the unity of style which runs through the two works, a recognition which we do not always find among advocates of partition theories, and that it accounts fairly well both for the facts which imply an early and those which imply a later date.¹

However, to confine ourselves to what we may consider certain: we have in these books historical works written by an educated Greek, or Greek-speaking Jew, who modelled his compositions on Greek literary work. He has paid attention to his sources. There were many others, he tells us, who had written narratives about the life and teaching of Jesus. He makes no claim to be an eyewitness, but he does claim to have received his information from those "who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word." Now we know that he was justified in this statement. He had had every opportunity of collecting information. After travelling with St. Paul, he had in his company visited Jerusalem, where he would be able to collect all the traditions, written and oral, of the early Christian community. He had probably been there or at Caesarea during the whole period of St. Paul's imprisonment. He had then travelled with him to Rome, where he must have come in contact with other Christians—very probably with both St. Peter and St. Mark. He had had, therefore, abundant opportunities of acquiring information. He also claims to have treated all things accurately from the first. When we come to examine his history, we find

¹ Dr. Streeter's theory may be found in the *Hibbert Journal*, vol. xx., No. 1, October, 1921, pp. 103-112, "Fresh Light on the Synoptic Problem." I do not think that in the form in which he has stated it it is correct, as there is not sufficient evidence to justify us in assuming two editions; but it has, I believe, this amount of truth—St. Luke had probably collected much material and planned his work before he came in contact with St. Mark's Gospel, which he would not do until he reached Rome.

that he has done his best to settle the chronology (perhaps not quite successfully); he has arranged the information which he has collected from several independent sources, as far as he could, in chronological order, and he has formed a fairly clear idea of the course of events. In the Acts, in particular, he traces with considerable skill the steps by which the Christian Church developed and expanded, and thus suggests a solution of the problem of the kingdom of heaven. He correlates his history to some extent with contemporary events in secular history; and he shows considerable interest in the civic organization of the provinces and cities that he describes. On the whole, he seems to represent a high type of historian.

Let us turn to the study of his sources. He made use of St. Mark's Gospel, and it is interesting to notice the manner in which he treats it, as we shall find that St. Matthew's method is different. In the first place he inserts it into his narrative in three considerable sections.¹ Then, secondly, St. Luke omits a very considerable amount of St. Mark, in particular the whole of a long section beginning at chapter vi. 45, and extending to chapter viii. 27. It used to be assumed (as we said above) that the reason of this was that St. Luke had before him an earlier edition of St. Mark which was without this section. Now it is almost universally agreed that he omits what he does omit because he wishes to economize space, and because most of the incidents in this section have parallels elsewhere in his Gospel. Then, thirdly, when the same event was contained in some other source, he seems to prefer that source to St. Mark. He gives the parable of the mustard seed, the discourse on casting out devils in the name of Beelzebub, and our Lord's teaching on divorce, in a form taken from *The Discourses*. He gives quite a different form of the story about the woman who washed our Lord's feet, and omits the story in St. Mark. He has a different account of the visit to Nazareth, and the calling of the first apostles, and of various other events. Fourthly, when St. Mark is his source, he

¹ One of these extends from iv. 31 to vi. 19, the second from viii. 1 to ix. 51, the third from xviii. 15 to the end of the Gospel, with much additional information from other sources.

generally reproduces it with considerable accuracy, but tries to represent the circumstances in which the event occurred. For instance, he adds a short preface to the story of healing the paralytic man, explaining that there were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law present. This is derived from information contained in the story, but is somewhat amplified by the statement that these persons had come from Jerusalem, a point which occurs in St. Mark in later stories only and is probably here inaccurate.¹ Then, lastly, I would ask you to notice that although St. Luke had a large amount of information about Jesus derived from several sources, he does not appear to have had anything like a consecutive history except St. Mark. If there were other consecutive histories, he certainly preferred St. Mark, and that Gospel provides the main part of his narrative.

The second source that he had was the collection of *The Discourses* of our Lord. These he treats in a somewhat different way from St. Matthew. There they are collected together in somewhat lengthy discourses, and combined with matter of a similar character obtained from St. Mark or elsewhere. In St. Luke we have them given much more often in a series of isolated sayings, probably as they occurred in the original. These sayings are found mainly in three sections.²

But there is still much information which does not come from either of these sources. Whence was it derived? Now, as regards this, we have no documentary assistance. Any conclusion must be purely conjectural. It is interesting, therefore, to notice how many writers first reconstruct their sources according to their own imaginations, and then argue from them as if they really existed. We cannot, of course, tell whether most of this information

¹ Compare Lk. v. 17-26 with Mk. ii. 1-12 and iii. 22.

² Chapters iii.-iv. 13; vi. 20-vii. 35; ix. 57-xvii. 33; in the last section mixed up with a good deal of matter probably from other sources. As Dr. Streeter points out, the matter from *The Discourses* (Q) is generally combined with that from other sources, while that from St. Mark appears for the most part in large blocks. This suggests, as he points out, that the combination of Q with other sources had taken place at an earlier stage than the combination with St. Mark.

comes from one source or from several, or how far any of it may have been derived from oral traditions. What we do know is that St. Luke was at Jerusalem and at Caesarea about A.D. 60, that he was likely to meet people who had themselves some knowledge of the events described, and that there were, as he tells us, many collections about our Lord's life. It is probable that he had a third written source, and that perhaps he collected together some oral tradition himself. Some of the additional episodes that he records, or details that he has added, do not compare favourably with St. Mark, and may have come from tradition, but a good deal of his special material seems to be excellent. I should like you, however, to remember how precarious are judgments of this sort, purely subjective as they are.¹

It has, however, been noticed that there are a considerable number of episodes peculiar to St. Luke which have a definite character of their own: the story of the Good Samaritan, of the Rich Fool, of the Lost Sheep, of the Lost Piece of Silver, of the Prodigal Son, of the Rich Man and Lazarus, of the Ten Lepers, of the Pharisee and the Publican, of Zaccheus, of the Penitent Thief. All these emphasize Divine Mercy and Forgiveness, Salvation through the Gospel and its extension to those outside the circle of the privileged. Their motto is: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." We may conjecture that these stories come from a document put together by someone to whom Christianity appealed especially as a doctrine of universal salvation. It may, indeed, quite possibly be St. Luke himself that made the selection. The Gospel shows signs throughout that the material was carefully chosen. St. Luke took it from the books which were before him in such a way as to bring out his conception of what Christianity meant.

We are concerned with St. Luke's historical accuracy. We know in two cases a good deal about the sources that he made use of. We know that they were good sources. We know that he used them well and with historical insight.

¹ The greater amount of this special information comes in the section ix. 51-xviii. 14, but mixed up with a good deal of matter apparently from *The Discourses*.

On no point can we detect any serious discrepancy. We may conjecture, as regards other sources, that he would use them in the same way, and there is no reason why we should neglect any information because it occurs only in this Gospel.¹

V

Of St. Matthew's Gospel we know nothing except what we learn from itself. It probably obtained its name from the collection of *The Discourses*, which was one of its chief sources, and was, perhaps, correctly ascribed to St. Matthew; perhaps, also, from the fact that the tradition preserved by Papias was supposed to refer to it. That tradition certainly does not apply to the first Gospel, which was not written in Aramaic, but in Greek, and is not the work of an eyewitness. As to its date, it must be later than St. Mark and earlier than St. John, and so nearly contemporary with St. Luke that probably neither writer had had the opportunity of seeing the work of the other. It must, moreover, have been composed under the influence of the fall of the Jewish state, and of the apocalyptic movement that accompanied it. It might have been written during the disturbances which preceded the destruction of the city, but was more probably, perhaps, produced shortly after that event. It was the work of a Jewish Christian or, at any rate, of one closely interested in the relation of Christianity to Judaism. While St. Mark and St. Luke wrote for Gentile readers, St. Matthew wrote for those who were in close contact with the Jewish question. He lays great stress on the argument from prophecy. He dwells on the contrast between the old dispensation and the new. He

¹ There are some interesting remarks on St. Luke's use of St. Mark by Dr. Burkitt in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. ii., pp. 106-120. He concludes (pp. 116, 117) that "in style and treatment it is worthy of its noble subject," that "the sketch which it gives of the Ministry of Jesus is characterized by 'general historical truth.'" "Luke is not inventing, but simply retelling, without essential change, tales that are to a large extent founded on the reminiscences of those who had heard the Master." He notices, on the other hand, that he has to a certain extent confused the chronological development in combining different documents, and suggests that the same may have happened in the Acts.

emphasizes, and possibly exaggerates, the anti-Jewish teaching of our Lord. He is the determined enemy of scribe and Pharisee. He is also more influenced than the other Evangelists by contemporary Jewish thought, and by apocalyptic and eschatological speculations, and this influence may possibly have coloured to some extent the report of our Lord's words.

If we turn to the structure of the Gospel, we notice a marked contrast to that of St. Luke. Both alike largely use St. Mark, but while St. Luke introduces the matter derived from him in certain large sections, St. Matthew bases the whole structure of his Gospel upon it, and disposes of the other matter that he has obtained—mostly records of teaching—in eight discourses, some of considerable length, which he inserts at suitable places in the narrative, in some cases amplifying a discourse already existing. It is, I think, clear that for the most part these discourses have been put together by the author from material derived from different sources. A further point to notice is the large number of passages from the Old Testament, introduced to carry out the purpose noted above of showing how prophecy has been fulfilled.

A difference from St. Luke may also be noticed in the way in which the sources are used. St. Luke, you will remember, leaves out a considerable part of St. Mark. St. Matthew gives almost the whole, but whenever it is possible shortens the narrative, and in doing so generally omits all those living touches which add so much to the vividness of St. Mark. It has been maintained that he does much more than this, and modifies the information he receives in dogmatic interests. The question is, of course, important, as it has been used to detract from the value of the Gospel, and demands some investigation.

St. Matthew was not a mere copyist. So far as he was selecting and arranging his material, he was doing what any modern historian would do in writing a life of our Lord, designed to bring out what he believed to be a true account of Him. Is there any reason to think that in doing this he faked his material? No doubt a modern critic of a certain type, when he sets himself to write a life of our Lord, does

omit quite unscrupulously everything which conflicts with his conception of that life without thinking it necessary to give any adequate reason. He does not scruple to alter or modify it, and he interprets it to suit the opinions he has formed, often in a way most difficult to justify. A good instance would be the narrative of the healing of the paralytic, where the whole episode about the forgiveness of sins is omitted, because it is held that our Lord could not have claimed to forgive sins. Now it is natural that a modern critic should suspect an ancient writer who was engaged in composing the life of our Lord of doing the same thing as he does himself, and it is obvious that it would be a serious matter if this is what he did. Are there any good grounds for suspecting it?

What do we think an historian should do? We do not expect him merely to copy his sources. We expect him to give us a narrative which shows us what he believed happened. We expect him to select his material intelligently. He cannot give us everything. But if he leaves out material which would seriously modify our impression, or if he alters it so as to give us something which represents his material quite erroneously, then we should consider him untrustworthy. We know, too, that we must not expect something more than human. There will certainly be some tendency for the opinions of the time when the author wrote to show themselves, and some signs of his own bias. That we must expect and allow for, and we shall find in the case before us some instances of it. The question is really one of degree.

It has been maintained that St. Matthew persistently exaggerates the miraculous, that he holds a more advanced view of the Person of Christ than St. Mark and modifies the narrative to suit it, and that he omits or softens what might reflect on the character of the disciples. Now the fundamental point is that he shortens the narrative of St. Mark whenever he can, and that leads to his omitting all those references to personal feelings and emotions which are so characteristic of St. Mark; but any real intention or tendency seems to be taken away by the fact that he inserts as well as omits. Is it likely, if the aim of St. Matthew had

been to eliminate passages which reflected on the disciples, that he would have added the story of St. Peter's attempt to walk on the sea with the rebuke, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" or have added to the story of the rebuke of Peter after his confession, "Thou art a stumbling-block"? Or if he had wished to exaggerate the miraculous would he have systematically cut short every narrative of the miraculous with one or two exceptions? or would it be likely that of the seven sections of St. Mark that he omits there should be four which have reference to the miraculous? It is, I think, possible to maintain that there was some tendency, probably unconscious, in St. Matthew to omit expressions which might seem to be over-familiar from a sense of reverence, but that is the utmost that can be maintained.

There is one passage on which greater stress has been laid. We are told in St. Mark that one ran unto Jesus and asked Him: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good save one, that is, God." In St. Matthew (but not in St. Luke) it becomes: "Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? But He said unto him: Why askest thou me concerning the good? one is the good."

It is maintained that the story in St. Mark is quite inconsistent with a belief in our Lord's divinity, that St. Matthew perceived this (although St. Luke did not), and that he has therefore changed it with a dogmatic purpose. I doubt whether any of these statements are true. Jesus did not mean to deny any divine functions, but to correct a thoughtless use of a word which meant so much more than its colloquial use implied. St. Matthew corrected it, because the first part of the dialogue seemed to be irrelevant to the rest of the story.

I feel certain that this instance is made to carry more than it can bear, and that the attempt to find any strong dogmatic tendency in such alterations is not successful. The real question is this, If we read St. Mark through, and then read St. Mark as edited by St. Matthew, shall we find any real difference in the presentment of Jesus? And the

answer must be, I think, that we cannot. St. Matthew gives the stories to a certain extent in his own words. He shortens them considerably. He occasionally seems to correct what he considers blunders. He sometimes adds information from another source, and some of his narratives show signs of conflation, perhaps, also, he softens harsh or common expressions; but there is no evidence for any dogmatic purpose, deliberate or even unconscious, in the alterations that he makes.

We can in all essentials trust St. Matthew's use of St. Mark, and we may assume that his use of his other sources was similar. One of these was *The Discourses*. The question arises whether much in St. Matthew which is not contained in St. Luke came from *The Discourses*. Was the section, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount on the relation of the Old and New Law in *The Discourses*? It is extremely probable that it was. St. Luke has preserved some few verses, and it was natural that he should omit the subject as hardly interesting to his readers in the same way that it was to the Jewish readers of St. Matthew. But it might, of course, also be argued that the section had been compiled by St. Matthew for that reason, and in any case it shows signs of being a compilation. There is nothing more than probability either way. We may conjecture, but we have no means of ascertaining whether we possess more of this second source than we can recover by comparing St. Matthew and St. Luke.

Of other sources we have no means even of forming a conjecture. There are a considerable number of parables preserved in St. Matthew alone, which are among the most interesting in the Gospels. There are some few incidents which might seem to have come direct from a floating popular tradition. I do not think, however, that we are justified in speaking of this secondary matter in so disparaging a way as some do. It seems to me to be most of it of the same stuff as the rest of the Synoptic tradition. St. Luke had other and trustworthy sources besides St. Mark and *The Discourses*. He tell us that in his time there were many accounts of our Lord's life and words in existence. There is no reason for thinking that St. Matthew had not

other good sources; and it is reasonable to believe that the information that he gives has come from such a source, unless there are obvious reasons for thinking the contrary.

VI

We have, then, four primary sources for the life of our Lord: *The Discourses* so far as we can reconstruct that document, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Matthew. We may safely assume that they all date from the first century, and could not have been written much, if at all, later than A.D. 80, for they were all used by St. John, and that they may have been written a good deal earlier. We have now to enquire what historical value is to be attached to these documents.

It has been maintained by the German Old Testament writer Wellhausen that the three Gospels may be distinguished as representing three successive stages in the development of Christian doctrine, and especially of the conception "the kingdom of God."¹ These opinions are echoed by Dr. Kirsopp Lake, who maintains that the value of the Gospels is to give us an account of the teaching of the Apostolic Church, and that only very partially do any of them give us information about the teaching of Jesus. The simple eschatological meaning of the kingdom is, it is alleged, found in St. Mark; in St. Matthew it means the Church, clearly a later development, and the subject-matter of that Gospel is inspired by the organization of the Apostolic Church; in St. Luke the meaning is rather that of the unseen Christian life, "The kingdom of God is within you."

It must be remembered that Wellhausen approaches the study of the New Testament with the presuppositions which his work on the Old Testament has given him. There, completing what former scholars had begun, he had been able to distinguish three or four great strata of material in the Pentateuch, which he held (and his contention has been generally accepted) to represent successive stages in the

¹ J. Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*. (Zweite Ausgabe, Berlin, 1911.) By far the most useful summary of criticism of this type for English readers is that given by Montefiore in *The Synoptic Gospels* (London, 1909).

development of the religion of Israel. Coming to the study of the New Testament, he is naturally inclined to pursue the same method of investigation and to expect the same results. The question is whether he is justified either in his method or in his expectation. The position is really very different. There the different documents were easily distinguishable by marked differences of style. There were centuries during which they were composed. They are the product of a long history. It is, therefore, quite reasonable to suppose that there may be sufficient signs of growth for the process to be discovered. But is it probable that the same can be said of documents which were produced within thirty years (at the most) of one another? It hardly seems so.

Now it may quite reasonably be admitted that both St. Matthew and St. Luke have written their Gospels with the interest of the Christian community before them. It is difficult to conceive how they could have done anything else. It is equally natural that in selecting the material at their disposal they should choose that which was most suitable to their circumstances. St. Matthew, therefore, writing for Jewish Christians, retains many passages dealing with Jewish controversy which St. Luke discards. St. Matthew, writing under the dominant influence of the last agonies of Jerusalem, emphasizes, probably over-emphasizes, the eschatological element in our Lord's teaching. St. Luke selects particularly the stories which illustrate our Lord's care for the outcast and sinner. Nor, again, would one expect that either Evangelist would be entirely free from the influences of his own time. For example, it is quite possible that St. Matthew's warning against false prophets, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves,"¹ is a later application of our Lord's words which follow. All such things are quite probable.

But Wellhausen means much more than this. He means that a large part of the teaching ascribed to our Lord in St. Matthew and St. Luke did not come from Him, but was the creation of the Apostolic Church. This he holds particularly of the teaching about "the Kingdom" which he makes apparently the crucial point. Now, if he were able

¹ Mt. vii. 15, 16.

to prove that the use of "the Kingdom" for "the Church" occurred only in later documents, he might have something substantial to go on; but that he cannot do. The parable of the mustard seed occurs in both the earliest sources, and must refer to some such conception of the Kingdom as is implied by the idea of the Church. So far, in fact, as there is any development it is in the other direction. The apocalyptic or eschatological idea is much more developed in St. Matthew than in the other Gospels. For instance, in St. Mark we read: "Verily I say unto you, there be some of those standing here which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power."¹ These words are, it may be noted, quite neutral in their content, and are compatible with any interpretation of the kingdom. But in St. Matthew we read, "till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."² Here there can be no doubt the words are intended to apply to the Parousia. It will be found, also, on examination that the number of instances in which "the Kingdom" must be interpreted in an apocalyptic sense is far greater in St. Matthew than in any other Gospel. The fact is that Wellhausen's generalization is not sound, and can only be supported in defiance of the evidence.³

In a similar way he contends not only that St. Mark is prior to St. Matthew and St. Luke, and that the history, as recorded in that Gospel, is more authentic, but that St. Mark may be looked upon as almost our only authority. St. Mark, it is contended, inserted in his Gospel everything that was known to him about our Lord, not only narrative, but teaching. It is impossible, it is said, to believe that he left out anything contained in other sources. In speeches, as well as in narrative, his account is prior. The Sermon on the Mount was not only unknown to him, but is inconsistent with what he tells us about Jesus. The same is true of the Lord's Prayer. There may be a few fragments of early tradition in the other Gospels, but most of what they give us is neither authentic nor historical.⁴ Now as far as I can

¹ Mk. ix. 1.

² Mt. xvi. 28.

³ This subject is worked out at greater length in Chapter VI.

⁴ Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 77, 78.

see there is no proof given in support of these assertions. They seem to be mere dogmatism. So far as I can judge, most of the material in the later Gospels is not only as early, but often, perhaps, more original than what is contained in St. Mark.

Let us now put aside all these and such-like negative theories which seem to have very little to commend them, and approach the definite question whether we have good grounds for thinking that the great bulk of the material contained in the Synoptic Gospels gives us authentic information about our Lord's life and teaching. What can we learn from the character of the contents? I would suggest to you the following points. First, the narrative of these books reflects the political and social conditions which prevailed in Palestine before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the change made by that event was so great that narratives such as these could not have been composed at a later time. Then, secondly, the religious ideas implied are those of a Judaism which was speedily transformed. As regards a large part of the narrative also, the life that is behind it is quite clearly that of Galilee and not of Jerusalem. Then, thirdly, the teaching, both as regards its content and its phraseology, represents something but little affected by later Christian theology. It is markedly different from what was built up afterwards by the early Church on the basis of our Lord's words.

You will find in Dr. Sanday's Bampton Lectures on Inspiration an admirable investigation of the first of the points just enumerated. He depicts the tremendous influence of that world-shaking catastrophe, the fall of Jerusalem, and then he proceeds:

“ Was there ever an easier problem for the critic to decide whether the sayings and narratives which lie before him come from the one side of this chasm or the other? ‘ If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.’ ‘ Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall

swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that hath sanctified the gold?' A leper is cleansed: 'And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.' 'And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought Him up to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord . . . and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.' 'And there was one Anna, a prophetess . . . which departed not from the temple, worshipping with fasting and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of Him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.' 'And they send unto Him certain of the Pharisees and the Herodians, that they might catch Him in talk. And when they were come they say unto Him . . . Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?' 'Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.'"¹

It may be noticed that the greater number of these instances are taken from the secondary matter of the Gospels, and represent therefore that portion which could generally be looked upon as later. As regards the strong Galilaean element, I shall discuss that when I speak of the Education of Jesus.² It will, I think, be found that there is a remarkable homogeneity of style and method in the greater part of our Lord's teaching which implies an homogeneity of source.

Then as regards the teaching. On the one side we have considerable knowledge of the thoughts and ideas of contemporary Judaism. There are many expressions and phrases which were clearly current at the time. All these are reflected in the Gospel teaching. It takes its place as something which, humanly speaking, could only have been produced at that period of the world's history and in

¹ *Inspiration: Eight Lectures on the Early History and Origin of the Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration*. Being the Bampton Lectures for 1893, by W. Sanday (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1893), pp. 284, 285.

² See Chapter II.

Palestine. Equally interesting is the contrast which the Gospels offer with later Christian development. We know from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles the teaching of the first generation of Christians. It is probable that the majority of the Epistles were written before our Gospels took their present form. St. Mark and St. Luke were written for Gentile readers, and there are signs that these Gospels were in some ways adapted to the needs of those for whom they wrote, but there are few signs of adaptation in the actual teaching of Jesus as it is reported in them. Such an expression as "the Son of man" never occurs in the Epistles; it occurs constantly in the Gospels, and we know that it was used in later Judaism. The "kingdom of heaven" would have been almost meaningless in Athens or Corinth. It might even have been dangerous. Only occasionally do we find it in the Epistles, and then clearly as a recognized archaism. It is the normal expression in the Gospels.

And there are few or no anachronisms. When the Gospels were written the Christian Church existed as an organized society. It would inevitably have been the case that if much of the Gospel teaching had originated at a time after the death of our Lord, it would have reflected the conditions of the Christian Society. But it is singularly difficult to discover even possible anachronisms. It has been maintained that we find one such in the introduction of the word *ecclesia* in St. Matthew. It may be so, although personally I see no reason why our Lord should not have used it, as it is an expression which comes straight from the Psalms. But even if it has come into the narrative later, we must notice how the words that accompany it concerning "binding and loosing," and the phraseology used in the promise to St. Peter, are not derived from Christian teaching, but are entirely Jewish in their associations. Perhaps the most marked contrast between the language of the Gospels and that of later Christianity is the rare occurrence in the words of our Lord of any reference to the Spirit. I know nothing which could be a more convincing proof of the authenticity of the teaching. The Apostolic period was the period of the Spirit. St. Luke wrote two works. In

the second, which deals with the Apostolic Church, references to the work of the Spirit abound; in the former they occur but seldom, and hardly at all in the words of Jesus. Whereas in St. John's Gospel (which, whatever we may think of it, clearly presents a later phraseology) there are important references to the Spirit, in the Synoptic Gospels they are but few. The Synoptic narratives represent a pre-apostolic stratum of Christian teaching.

I hope that what I have said may suggest to you that we have strong grounds for thinking that in the Synoptic Gospels we have authentic information about the life and teaching of Jesus. The Gospels, as we have them, are the product of the second generation of Christians; they contain the records of our Lord's life as they were written down by the first generation, and as they had been delivered orally from the beginning. A further test of this authenticity will be furnished, if we are able to construct out of them some homogeneous account of the life and teaching of our Lord.

It remains to ask how we should use them. It is the custom to lay great stress on what is contained in St. Mark or in *The Discourses*, or in both, and to depreciate the matter peculiar to St. Luke, and still more that in St. Matthew. I doubt very much whether that attitude is really justified. I certainly think that it has been carried too far. There are, no doubt, both in St. Matthew and in St. Luke, some narratives which may represent a doubtful tradition; the same is probably true of St. Mark. There are, however, no good reasons for thinking that the special source (whatever it may have been) of St. Luke, and the sources from which St. Matthew derived the bulk of his peculiar teaching, were inferior to the other two sources that we possess. If Dr. Streeter's conjectures have anything in them (and they help, as we have seen, to solve certain problems), St. Luke came across his special source a considerable time before he came across St. Mark, very probably, in fact, before St. Mark was written. It is, therefore, not only earlier in date, but perhaps in some ways more original. These facts suggest a different method. We have really, at least, four independent sources. We have St. Mark, *The Discourses*, St. Luke's special source, and St. Matthew's

source or sources. We must give the greater weight to such aspects of our Lord's teaching as may be gathered from all these sources, or at any rate may harmonize with what they tell us. Isolated teaching we shall be more cautious in admitting. I cannot, however, see any justification for the statement which I find so confidently made that the parables of the tares or of the sheep and goats, to take two instances, are not authentic. In style and subject-matter alike they harmonize with other teaching of our Lord, and they fill in details in the picture which we construct from all these sources. We shall gradually, from the evidence before us, construct our story. It will be the consistency of the whole which will be some verification of our process. What I think scientific criticism would certainly forbid would be to rule out any aspects of life and teaching on *a priori* grounds. It may be quite possible that when we have finished we may find alien elements which refuse to combine. If we do, we shall rightly discard them. What is unscientific is to begin by discarding.

VII

We come now to St. John's Gospel. You will recognize that at present there is nothing very convincing to be said about it. The whole critical question is in confusion, and neither those who hold the traditional view nor their opponents are able to put forward a theory which commands assent. It is quite clear from external testimony that a date much later than A.D. 100 is quite impossible. In fact, it may be doubted if the Gospel can be as late as that. This much the investigations of the last century appear to have established. Then, again, the tradition of the Johannine authorship is very strong. On the other hand, a study of its contents places serious difficulties in the way of ascribing it directly to a contemporary and first-hand authority. It differs so remarkably from the Synoptic Gospels.

The style of the speeches is so different. There are so many apparent anachronisms. The language is just what the language of the Synoptists is not, influenced by later theology. I do not say that these characteristics

present insuperable objections to the traditional theory, but they demand consideration. Then, again, persistent arguments are brought forward to show that John, the son of Zebedee, so far from living to a great age and being the last survivor of the apostolic band, had really been put to death by the Jews in the early days of the Church, probably at the same time as his brother James. Again, I do not think the arguments convincing, but they throw much uncertainty over the whole problem. Some have attempted to make use of John the presbyter to solve the problem. Some have invented a beloved disciple a Jerusalem convert. Some have thought that the beloved disciple was never intended to be a real person, but was an ideal creation, that person who had never existed who was able really to understand his Master. I am not going now to attempt to solve these problems, but I am going to look at the Gospel from another point of view, and setting aside entirely the question of authorship, ask whether it shows signs of containing independent and sound historical tradition.

To begin with, let me say that we may, I think, be satisfied that so far as concerns everything except the language the book is not Greek. In a sense, indeed, this is true even of the language, for the style of St. John's Gospel is such that no real Greek would ever have written it. The Dean of St. Paul's has told us that the fourth Gospel may be looked upon as a handbook to a Greek mystery religion. There is, I believe, no justification at all for such a statement. The author of the Gospel was a Jew, whose thoughts and ideas were drawn almost exclusively from Jewish sources. Even the famous term the Logos has antecedents, as Westcott pointed out, not only in the Old Testament, but in Rabbinical Judaism, and it is not probable that the author of the Gospel went further afield than the Jew Philo or some follower of his for the Hellenic colouring (if, indeed, there be such) in the use of the word. The style is throughout Semitic, and as Dr. Burney has shown, it may be easily retranslated into Aramaic.¹ That does not, I think, mean,

¹ *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, by the Rev. C. F. Burney, M.A., D.Litt. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1922). Dr. Burney's

as he suggests, that there was an Aramaic original, but that the author, an Aramaic-speaking Jew, thought in that language, and had created for himself this somewhat curious Greek medium for expressing his thoughts. Moreover, the tendency of all recent investigation has been to emphasize more decisively how much in the Gospel harmonizes with traditional Jewish thought. Many parallels to its teaching may be found in the Midrash. The life and society that is depicted is that of Jerusalem when the Temple was standing. Its whole contents belong to an epoch which passed away when Jerusalem was destroyed.

If we turn to the contents there are, I think, quite clear signs that the author was acquainted with all the three Synoptic Gospels. He might use them for the incidents that he described, which were almost always introduced as the occasion of instruction, and to a certain extent he has done so; but the interesting fact is that he generally prefers to tell us something which they did not, and even when he does follow them he adds information, or even appears to be silently correcting them. Was all this imaginative reconstruction, as some have held, or had the author independent knowledge, whether gained from tradition, or from written sources, or from his own personal acquaintance with the events that he describes?

Let us examine some of the narratives. I will begin with the story of the feeding of the multitude. Here a statement is made, which is not in the other Gospels, and is clearly of great importance. We are told that the people wished to make Jesus a king. Now this is hardly a trait which the writer would have been likely to invent or to imagine. It has little to do with his purpose in narrating the incident, which was mainly as an introduction to the discourse on the Bread of Life. Yet, if it be true, it throws great light on the story as we have it in the Synoptic Gospels. It helps to make the narrative of the ministry comprehensible. It explains the crisis that had been reached. The full

work is one of great importance. It seems to me at least sufficient to prove that the author thought in Semitic form, and that the affinities of his subject-matter are Jewish and not Hellenic.

meaning will come out in our narrative; the point I wish to emphasize now is that here we have information which is independent, which has the appearance of being authentic, and was not likely to have been invented by the author.¹

So, again, if we turn to the beginning of the Gospel, we learn that there was an early connection between the disciples of Jesus and John, that some of them had been followers of John, and that Jesus Himself had been more or less associated with the preaching of John. Now all this seems to supplement what we read in the Synoptic Gospels. Why is it that St. Mark tells us that it was after John was delivered up that Jesus came to Galilee? Surely this implies that there had been a close connection between the two, just as we are told in St. John's narrative. Why, again, does St. Peter in the Acts, when he describes the qualification of an apostle, state that their witness began with the baptism of John? Surely that implies that the disciples of Jesus were drawn from those who had followed the Baptist. Here, again, we seem to have authentic information.²

Or let us turn to the other end of the ministry. According to St. John's Gospel, our Lord was first brought before Annas. Now for many reasons this was extremely probable. Annas was the power behind the throne. High priest himself for only a short time, owing probably to the Roman fear of the man who was too strong, his sons held the office in succession, and Caiaphas was his son-in-law. Moreover, if, as tradition says, the unlawful gains from the traffic in the Temple court were the chief source of the wealth of his family, he had a personal grievance. The incident is quite probable, and it is a little difficult to see why it should have been invented. Here, again, we seem to have good information.

A still more important point is the date of the crucifixion. That we mentioned as one of the great difficulties in the story of St. Mark. It is difficult to believe that the trial and crucifixion should have taken place on the actual day of the Passover. It is quite natural that the indecent haste which characterized the trial of our Lord arose from the desire that it should be over before the festival

¹ See below, Chapter VII.

² See Chapter III.

began. Here, again, the narrative of St. John appears to preserve an authentic tradition.

There are other narratives, also, which present similar signs of authenticity. It is clear that our account of the Galilaean narrative is very fragmentary and presents large gaps. Visits to Jerusalem, also, are certainly probable; Jesus, as a loyal Jew, would wish to keep the feasts. We have, therefore, I hold, reason for thinking that (whatever opinion we hold about the authorship of the fourth Gospel) it certainly contains authentic and independent tradition. We know that there must have been a much larger amount remembered about Jesus than is contained in the other three Gospels. We know that there were other sources of written information available. Much might be explained if it were true that the author or source of the Gospel was an elderly disciple who combined with a vivid memory of some events a great power of spiritual insight. The point that is important for our purpose and that I wish to emphasize is that we have in the fourth Gospel information which we may use to supplement and illustrate what we obtain from other sources.

As regards the teaching, there can, I think, be little doubt that, as we have it, it represents a development; that it has been translated into the language and forms of thought of a later time; that it is influenced in a way that the teaching in the other Gospels is not by the theological ideas and expressions which grew up in the Apostolic Church. But having recognized so much, we may still hold that it represents a real tradition. The writer knew and understood our Lord's teaching, and interpreted it in a way which would harmonize with the thought of his own time. He wished us to understand what seemed to him to have been our Lord's real meaning. No doubt in doing this he would go beyond the actual words of Jesus, but that does not mean that his knowledge was not derived from a good source nor his interpretation correct.

Our method of using the Gospel must, I am afraid, at present be a somewhat eclectic one. Our aim is to write a history, not a theology. We want to know what Jesus actually did and said, and how He said it. We must be

prepared, therefore, to judge each incident on its merits, and see how far it is possible to combine it with the Synoptic narrative. We have, indeed, to do that to a certain extent in relation to the earlier Gospels. So as regards the teaching. We can use it particularly when it seems to bring out and strengthen the Synoptic tradition. Very often it gives a meaning to it. But we have to be on our guard against developments which are natural and represent the purpose of our Lord's Ministry, but do not represent what He actually said. We shall not understand the method of that ministry if we confuse legitimate development with actual teaching. Our attitude must be the same as that habitual in writing secular history. We have to construct our picture from all material available, and estimate the relative value of different authorities. We must not begin our work by ruling any out.

VIII

Of the secondary sources which have been enumerated above I need not say anything further, with the exception of the evidence of the Apostolic Church. You will find it often asserted that the Gospels were the creation of the Christian Church—"Mark," say Dr. Kirsopp Lake and Dr. Foakes Jackson, "is far more a primary authority for the thought of the Apostolic Age than for the life of Jesus. We have, indeed, no better authority; but it must be taken for what it is."¹ It may be hoped that the investigations just concluded will constitute some evidence towards throwing doubt on this proposition, but a question is raised which must be often in our minds. If the Church created the Gospels, what created the Church? The problem before anyone who attempts to write about the life of Jesus is to explain the Apostolic Church and the fact of Christianity. The cause for these remarkable phenomena must be one really sufficient.

What this problem means a single illustration will disclose. In the two Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians we have documents of whose date, authorship, and authenticity there can be no doubt. From them we can get a fairly

¹ *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 268.

clear and sufficient account of what was the character of a nascent Christianity. We can put together a picture of the Christian Church at that time. We can learn its beliefs, its theology, and its ethics. The picture that is presented to us is a remarkable one; the religious spiritual and moral life there portrayed represent a most remarkable human achievement. We can compare it with anything that ever existed before, whether Jewish or Gentile, and there is nothing like it. A complete revolution in thought and life has been created. It has grown up in the short space of some twenty-five years. It was undoubtedly the result of the life and teaching of Jesus. We must so describe that life as to account for this new spiritual epoch.

In the literature of the Apostolic Church we find some striking new ideas. One is the new position which the word *agape*, or love, and the ideas that it represents have attained. The word is almost new. The idea is in quite a novel form. We find it clearly represented as the great motive of life in St. Paul, we find it in St. John and St. Peter. It becomes at once a normal and the most essential part of Christian ethics. There is nothing similar in any pre-Christian writings Jewish or Gentile. When we turn to our sources we find it part of the teaching of Jesus, although in St. Mark, at any rate, the reference to it is slight. Yet this reference is sufficient to show that it came from the teaching of Jesus himself, and enables us to see how Christian ethical teaching was created by the words of its founder.

In the same way we have in this apostolical literature a remarkable conception of the person of Jesus. The several writers have each their own character; their manner of expression is not uniform, but they all agree in depicting a person quite different from anything that had ever appeared elsewhere. Jesus is the Messiah, the fulfilment of Jewish expectations; He is the Son of God; He is the Lord; He is the Saviour of mankind; He is the source of life and light to the world; He is the object of human devotion and adoration; His coming has created a new epoch in the world. Human nature has been transformed. Human life has a higher meaning. There is no limitation to the wonder and glory that is ascribed to Him. All this happened within the

lifetime of many that knew his earthly life. Almost the complete development, if it be a development, occurs within a generation. Who or what was He that He could be so spoken of amongst those who knew Him?

A Christian Church grew up. It began in Jerusalem, but it spread with extreme rapidity throughout the world. Wherever it appeared it aroused extraordinary devotion and enthusiasm among those who became members of it. They were ready to give themselves up for this new cause even unto death. Their whole life was transformed. Their ideas were marvellously changed. They had attained a new power. All this was believed to be owing to the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Who and what was He that He could produce this new life?

I have very shortly thus sketched the problem that is before us. We have certain documents which describe to us the life of Jesus. We have from these to try to imagine what He was, remembering what the generation of those who had known Him thought of Him, and what He made them become. The problem of Jesus is the problem of Christianity.

CHAPTER I

PALESTINE, CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS, AT THE TIME OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

THOSE educated in the profound peace of Victorian England have in the last four years learnt to understand the joy and hope with which the civilized world greeted the establishment of the Augustan age.¹ For more than three years we have seen Europe and Asia devastated by the horrors of war. We have seen France and Belgium, Poland and Galicia, Serbia, Roumania, Italy, overrun by hostile armies, their wealth plundered and their people enslaved. We have seen the Christians of Armenia and Syria massacred. We are watching the chaos of a great revolution in the most conservative country of Europe. A new and hideous piracy has endangered the seas. The armies that have been fighting are greater than history has recorded or imagined. There were over 40,000,000 men under arms. More than 5,000,000 have laid down their lives. The hope of a generation has been destroyed. No wonder there is a great longing for peace, and men, stirred by the scenes which they have witnessed and the contest in which they have fought, are dreaming of a new Europe and a reconstructed world.

How infinitely greater must have been the longing for peace during the birth travail of the Roman Empire! For a hundred years at home and abroad the civilized world had endured a continuous succession of wars, of murders, of rebellions and fratricidal strife. Their great men had been murdered, from the Gracchi to Caesar and Cicero. They had seen twelve civil wars and five great massacres. They might have walked for 150 miles along the highway from Rome to Capua and seen, extending the whole distance, the crosses bearing the bodies of the captured gladiators. They had

¹ This chapter was written in the spring of 1918. I have not thought it necessary to rewrite this passage.

seen the seas teeming with pirates, the East in the hands of barbarians, the Roman citizens of the provinces massacred. The forum had resounded with the complaints of the plundered provinces, and the country far and wide revealed the decay of agriculture and of honest industry.¹ No wonder the victory of Caesar and the generosity that he exhibited—it seemed the sign of a new age—roused lofty hopes. His murder dashed them to the ground. Expectations were concentrated on his heir, the young Octavius. Brundisium brought peace, but a peace which was fallacious. At length Actium brought victory and peace. The gates of Janus were closed.

The world enjoyed at last freedom from war, a stable government, a well-ordered commonwealth, seas free for peaceful commerce, agriculture and industry restored. An outburst of material prosperity heralded the dawn of a new age, and Virgil, the poet of Roman greatness in the past, was the prophet of a recreated world.² When in 40 B.C. the rulers of the world had made peace at Brundisium, and Pollio, the poet, was consul, and Augustus was expecting the birth of an heir, he sang how the last aeon of the world's history, the kingdom of God that the Cumaean sibyl foretold, had now come. A new cycle of the ages had begun. The ancient kingdom of Saturn would be restored. The age of gold was at hand. Justice once more would visit the earth she had so long deserted. From heaven would descend a child of promise. The whole earth rejoiced at his coming, and the heavens greeted the advent of the heaven-sent ruler who would complete the work his father had begun. A new peace would fall on the world. The strife of animals, as of men, would end. All evil things would cease to hurt. The

¹ I am indebted for this paragraph to Professor Conway, *Virgil's Messianic Eclogue*, p. 33.

² The English reader may learn all that is necessary about the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil in *Virgil's Messianic Eclogue, its Meaning, Occasion, and Sources*, three studies by Joseph B. Mayor, W. Warde Fowler, R. S. Conway, with the text of the eclogue and a verse translation by R. S. Conway (London: John Murray, 1907). He will find the problems treated with learning, insight, and intelligence, and if he desires to wander further into the literature of the subject, which is vast, it will serve him as an introduction.

earth would bear more rich and varied fruits, and the bounty of nature would imitate all the arts of man. Virgil never loses faith in a new world of justice, mercy, and peace inaugurated by the divine Julian race.¹

Our hopes of the future are seldom realized in the way that we form them. We seldom attain what we desire. But however different the result may be from our anticipations, our spiritual aspirations are not in vain. The son whose birth Augustus expected and Virgil foretold was never born. The Roman Empire fulfilled its part in the world's history, and prepared the way, as we shall have to narrate, for the rise and triumph of Christianity, but it was a poor reflection of the hopes of the poet. Yet Virgil was all unconsciously the prophet of the greatest spiritual revolution the world had seen; he has attained a fame which he could not have understood as the herald of a new religion, and his poem has played an all unexpected part in the religious history of the world.

In contrast to the joy with which the world greeted the new Empire was the attitude of the Jews in Palestine—an attitude of sullen resistance. It took the form of opposition to whatever government they might have. When they were under their own Hasmonæan kings there was no language too strong to express their hatred. Herod succeeded and, in a vulgar Eastern way, reproduced for his kingdom the law and order, the peace and material prosperity, that Augustus had given the world; yet their hatred of him and his family was profound. They demanded to live according to their own laws under the immediate rule of the Romans. When granted their request, they exhibited for the priestly aristocracy that governed them the most profound contempt, and Roman rule produced a bitter opposition which consolidated into the sect of the Zealots, now suppressed, now bursting out afresh, continued until the final rebellion and the indescribable horrors of the fall of Jerusalem. It may be held that this attitude of resentment was due to the unfortunate character of the rulers. That no doubt increased the evil, but it was not the cause. Rather the harshness of

¹ Compare Virgil, *Ecl.*, iv., 4-7, 50-53; ix., 4-7; *Aen.*, i., 291-294; vi., 792-795; 852-854.

the rule was largely the result of the turbulence of the people, which was of a character beyond the endurance of any ordinary ruler. The fundamental cause was the revolt of a religious sense, often no doubt much perverted, against a purely material and entirely irreligious civilization. It must be recognized that the Roman Empire was in its essence unspiritual—so the literature of the Augustan age reveals it. And if Virgil perhaps throws a halo of romance around it, that was an idealism which few shared. Augustus accomplished his task, but he had no vision himself, and gave no inspiration to the world that he had recreated. The old religions were destroyed. The new state religion of the imperial cult could never arouse any conviction. To many it was blasphemous, to many ridiculous. It produced at best a certain social cohesion. The Empire gave law and order and stability; it secured the merchant his gains; it enabled the farmer to sow in peace; it made a life of pleasure easy; but it had destroyed the old ideals and could not create new ones.

The world, weary of disorder, acquiesced in the loss of liberty; disillusioned and without faith, it acquiesced in religious unreality. There were few that were dissatisfied. But the Jew had a real belief and cherished his hope and his faith. The result was twofold. There were those who clung to old political aims. They were zealous, but with a perverted zeal. They never accepted the necessity of Roman rule. They had to submit to force, but they never neglected an opportunity of resistance. The slightest incident fanned the flame. So the next seventy years are the history of an opposition, now concealed, now open, of a destructive fire at times smouldering, at times breaking out into flame, until it ended in the final conflagration.

But side by side with this was another history. There were many who cherished the most spiritual ideals of Israel. In all the turmoil and strife these were never lost. They preserved the loftiest hopes of the Prophets, and practised the profound religion of the Psalms. They lived in piety and obscurity. To them a message came, a gospel of good tidings, which could satisfy their hopes, which showed them how religion could accept the rule of Rome, and enabled

them to fulfil the mission that their nation had to accomplish for the world.

These are the two threads of history we have to follow

I

At the beginning of the Christian era the Jewish nation was approaching its end. The brilliant episode of the Maccabees had ended in moral failure and disillusionment. The campaign of Pompey in the east had destroyed the reality of independence, though the appearance might still remain. Herod the Great, during his long reign (37-4 B.C.), had suppressed disorder, established a strong rule, created material prosperity, introduced some measure of Greco-Roman civilization, and brought his kingdom into line with the rest of the Empire. He had partly conciliated, partly suppressed, often with a fierce ruthlessness, the religious opposition. The closing years of the reign of the fierce tyrant had been marked by domestic murders and public cruelty. Augustus is reputed to have said that it would be better to be Herod's sow than his son. The Gospel narrative has preserved for us an account of the massacre of the young children at Bethlehem, an incident entirely harmonious with the character of the King; and the Jewish historian has told us how Herod burnt alive the Rabbis who had instigated the destruction of the idolatrous figure of an eagle on the pinnacle of the temple. When his death came it let loose the forces of discontent which had long been smouldering.¹

Herod died 4 B.C., shortly before the Passover. He had left to Archelaus Judaea and Samaria with the title of King; but it was necessary that the Emperor should confirm the will, and Archelaus, followed by the whole family of Herod,

¹ Our main authority for the history of the period contained in this chapter is Josephus in his two works the *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities*. Unfortunately for the greater part of it, his information was somewhat scanty. During the reign of Herod the Great he was able to draw on the history of Nicolaus of Damascus, who, as Herod's secretary and minister, had ample knowledge. But that authority almost immediately ceases, and we have little information until we reach the period of Josephus's own life. It is a matter of regret that just for the most important period we have no fullness of detail.

by deputations of Jews and of the Greek cities, shortly went to Rome to plead his cause before Augustus.

But before this happened disturbances began. Archelaus buried his father with great pomp. The funeral was followed by a public mourning for the murdered Rabbis, who were regarded as martyrs for the law, and violent disturbances in which over 3,000 were slain were the result. At Pentecost, after Archelaus had started for Rome, more severe revolts broke out throughout the whole country. Those at Jerusalem resulted in great loss of life and much damage to the newly built temple, but the disturbances elsewhere were more significant.

In Idumaea, to the south, 2,000 of Herod's old soldiers fought against Achiabus, Herod's cousin, and drove him into the mountains. In Galilee Judas, the son of the robber Ezekias, whom Herod had killed, seized the arsenal at Sepphoris, armed his followers, and spread terror through the country. He was apparently aiming at being king. In Peraea a former servant of Herod called Simon, distinguished for his height and personal beauty, "placed a diadem on his head." He led a wild mob across the Jordan, and plundered and burnt Herod's palace at Jericho. He was attacked and defeated, and his head was cut off. Other insurgents in Peraea destroyed Herod's palace at Betharamphtha beyond Jordan. An even more formidable rebel was a certain Athronges, a shepherd by profession, distinguished for personal bravery and courage. He too called himself king, and with his four brothers harried Judaea and Samaria with robber bands. They attacked and cut off isolated detachments of Roman soldiers, and it was long before the last of them submitted to Archelaus.¹

¹ We have a reference to these events in the apocryphal work styled the "Assumption of Moses": "And he (Herod) will beget sons that shall succeed him and shall reign for shorter times. Into their parts shall come the strong, and a mighty king of the West who shall conquer them and lead them captive and shall burn part of their temple with fire and shall crucify them around their colony" (*Assumptio Mosi*, vi.).

There can be no doubt that this refers to the reign of Archelaus and the war in 4 B.C., when the troops left under the charge of Sabinus burnt the cloisters of the temple. Archelaus reigned a

We need not linger over the story of the suppression of these revolts, but a few words must be said as to their character.

We owe our knowledge of it to Josephus, who, with a Gentile audience in view, systematically conceals or underestimates the religious element. No doubt it was the mutiny of Herod's soldiers that made the revolt formidable, but it must be noticed that it broke out at the Feast of Pentecost, which may be taken as evidence that the underlying cause was, as always in Jewish unrest, religious. The departure to Rome of all the leading members of the family of Herod seemed to give an opportunity for revolt, the exactions of the Roman procurator fanned the flames, but we have here a renewed sign of the deep-seated religious ferment which again and again shows itself in such wild outbursts. The affection that the Sanhedrin exhibited for Ezekias, a robber whom Herod had put to death, is evidence that Josephus obscured the true character of that movement, which must have been religious. His son Judas, who would preserve the traditions—even if he were not the Judas who founded the sect of the Zealots—Simon, Athronges, were not merely insurgents who aimed at royal power, but were false Christs; and if Theudas,¹ who gave himself out to be someone, belongs to this period, he is further evidence of the same spirit. Jewish unrest would not have been as for-

much shorter period than his father (nine years), but Herod Antipas reigned forty-three years, and Philip thirty-seven, so that it is most probable that this work was written shortly after the death of Archelaus. It must have been produced at a time when the memory of the assault on the temple was fresh in the writer's mind.

¹ Acts v. 36: πρὸ γὰρ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀνέστη Θεοδᾶς λέγων εἶναι τινα αὐτόν, ᾧ προσεκλήθη ἀνδρῶν ἀριθμὸς ὡς τετρακοσίων. ὃς ἀνηρίθη, καὶ πάντες ὅσοι ἐπέιθοντο αὐτῷ διελύθησαν καὶ ἐγένοντο εἰς οὐδέν. This is mentioned as taking place before the rising of Judas the Galilaean. There are three alternative explanations: (1) St. Luke has made a mistake, and put into the mouth of Gamaliel a reference to a rebellion which took place some years later. (2) That this was one of the disturbances referred to by Josephus, *Antt.*, xvii., 285, *B.J.*, ii., 55, without the name of the leader being mentioned. (3) That Theudas was the second name of some other leader. See Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, 903, p. 124. See also Hastings, *Bible Dictionary*, iv., 750.

midable as it was if it had not been that it was always inspired by religion.

We need not follow the history of the events in Rome, where the fate of Palestine had to be decided in the council of Augustus, although the detailed account of imperial administration that we have is full of interest.

Augustus substantially confirmed Herod's will. He gave Samaria, Judaea, and Idumaea to Archelaus. He was to have the title of Ethnarch, which was to be changed to that of King if he governed virtuously—that is, if he kept order and a fair measure of contentment. Antipas obtained Galilee and Peraea; Philip, Trachonitis and the country to the north. The Samaritans had a quarter of their taxes taken off, because they had not joined in the revolt. Joppa, Jerusalem, Sebaste, and Caesarea were left to Archelaus, but the Greek cities Gaza, Gadara, and Hippos obtained their freedom and were joined to the province. Salome had the revenues of Jamnia, Ashdod, and Phasaelis, to which Augustus added Herod's palace in Ascalon, but her possessions were under the government of Archelaus. There were many other legacies, but Augustus gave up all that was left to him with the exception of certain personal memorials. The revenue of Archelaus was said to be 600 talents, of Antipas 200, of Philip 100, and of Salome 50.

So Archelaus came back established in his government. The story of his journey was well known, and may have supplied the incidents for the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom.¹ We are told that his citizens hated him and sent an embassy after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." He was a man who demanded full return without mercy! "Thou knowest that I am a hard man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow." His final words were: "Howbeit these mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth and slay them before me."

From this time onwards we cease to have any detailed account of the affairs of Judaea, as we lose the guidance of Nicolaus of Damascus, and we have not yet reached the

¹ Luke xix. 12-27.

period of Josephus's own life, so we have no information as to what happened when Archelaus returned. We may, however, feel certain that any member of the Jewish embassy to Augustus who had the hardihood to return to Palestine would pay the penalty for his rashness.

Of the reign of Archelaus we are almost devoid of information. On his return to Judaea he accused Joazar son of Boethos, the high priest, of sedition—probably of having supported the embassy sent to Rome—and appointed his brother Eleazar in his place. Not long afterwards Eleazar was deposed and Jesus, son of See, appointed. Like other Herods, Archelaus showed himself a builder. He restored the royal palace at Jericho which Simon had destroyed; he extended the palm groves, diverting the water from a village called Neara for their irrigation; he commemorated his own name by building a village there which he called Archelais. He outraged the religious feelings of the nation by marrying Glaphyra, the daughter of Archelaus, King of Cappadocia, and widow of his brother Alexander, by whom she had had three children. His own wife was still living, and Glaphyra had married as her second husband Juba, King of Mauretania, who was also alive. But it was the marriage with his brother's widow, more than the double adultery, which was condemned.

All our accounts tell us that Archelaus was the most brutal of all the sons of Herod. His own relations, with the exception of Philip, had been vehemently opposed to his appointment as his father's successor. He had certainly shown no scruples in suppressing the insurrection on his succession, and the butchery of 3,000 unarmed men might lay him open to the charge of ferocity. He had succeeded in stamping out the rebellion of Athronges and his brothers. He had probably punished with severity those who opposed his succession. Of the rest of his reign we know nothing. What is known is that, after enduring him for nine years, the leading men of Judaea and Samaria could no longer put up with his tyranny and barbarity, and accused him to Augustus. As a result of enquiry the Emperor seems to have had no doubt of the truth of the charge, and refused even to communicate with Archelaus personally. He sent a

message to him by his steward, who himself bore the same name, to summon him to Rome, and banished him to Vienne in Gaul, depriving him even of his personal wealth.

Augustus had had sufficient experience of Herods. Judaea was now brought under direct Roman rule, being subordinated to the province of Syria, but under a procurator of its own. This took place in A.D. 6.

II

To organize the new province Augustus sent Publius Sulpicius Quirinius. He was an excellent example of the capable man, soldier and administrator alike, by whom the Emperor was served. He was consul in the year 12 B.C., shortly afterwards Proconsul of Asia. He had already held the office of Governor of Syria, and had conducted a successful war against the mountain tribes of Cilicia, for which he had obtained the ornaments of a triumph.¹ During his tenure of the office the first census had been held in Syria. Later he had been appointed adviser to Gaius Caesar when he held a high command in the East against Armenia, which included the province of Syria. He therefore came to his work with wide experience in Eastern affairs, and laid the foundation of Roman rule in Palestine on a basis which, so far as we know, preserved a considerable measure of peace until the disastrous governorship of Pontius Pilate.

Special regulations were made for the government of Judaea. It became part of the province of Syria, but was placed under a procurator, or governor of the third class of

¹ On this see Tacitus, *Ann.*, lii., 48; Strabo, xii., 6, 5. The reasons for thinking that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria are: (1) the statement of Tacitus that he had carried on war against the Homonadenses in Cilicia before his post in attendance on Gaius. This he could only have done had he been governor of a province with military power, and that could only have been Syria (to which Cilicia was joined). (2) The existence of a mutilated inscription in honour of someone who was twice governor of Syria, which seems most suitably to fit Quirinius (*C.I.L.*, xiv., 3613). The date of the first governorship is fixed by Mommsen, in A.D. 2-3, but Ramsay gives reasons, on the strength of two inscriptions of Antioch in Pisidia, for placing it earlier (Ramsay, *Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, pp. 275-300; Schürer, *Geschichte*, i., 322-324).

knightly and not senatorial rank. It was advisable that the outward signs of Roman rule should be inconspicuous. So far as was possible the country was given self-government. There were no Roman legionary troops, only auxiliaries, and some of these had formed part of Herod's old army. The administration of justice was mainly in the hands of the native courts. The chief duty of the procurator was financial. He was, of course, responsible for the maintenance of law and order, and alone had the power of life and death. The exact position in relation to the Governor of Syria is not defined for us. The latter had the supreme military authority, and, if need be, he could be called in with the legions which he had under his command. He could enquire into complaints of misgovernment, and, although perhaps only when acting with direct instructions from Rome, he could in an emergency regulate the affairs of the country. So we find that the Samaritans appealed to Vitellius, the Governor of Syria, against Pontius Pilate, whom he sent to Rome to answer his accusers, and that Vitellius shortly afterwards visited Jerusalem himself, and showed great discretion in appeasing the Jews.

The Roman province of Palestine was confined to the territories of Judaea (which now always included the district to the south, called Idumaea) and Samaria, and not all of these, for some of the Greek towns, certainly Gaza and Ascalon, were independent, and directly subject to the Governor of Syria. The residence of the procurator was Caesarea, which tended more and more to become a heathen city. Only occasionally at the time of the feasts and for other particular purposes would he visit Jerusalem, where the great palace-fortress of Herod on the western hill would be both his place of residence and also the praetorium, where he would dispense justice. The nucleus of the forces under his command was formed by the Sebasteni, a portion of the army of Herod, who numbered about 3,000—500 cavalry and five cohorts of infantry. These were stationed at Caesarea. There was normally a cohort of infantry with some mounted troops attached in the castle of Antonia at Jerusalem, and there were troops at Samaria. Whether any other places were garrisoned we do not know.

So far as possible the Jews were allowed to live after their own laws—that is, the government was in the hands of the Sanhedrin, composed mainly of the priestly aristocracy, with the high priest as president. Within the limits of Judæan territory, they with the local Sanhedrins exercised jurisdiction over all Jews. Except possibly for certain offences they had not power of life and death, and therefore a capital sentence imposed by them had to be confirmed by the procurator. We are particularly told that on the question of violating the sanctity of the temple their jurisdiction extended even to Roman citizens. It did not, however, extend into Samaria, nor into any Greek cities, not even those who were still subject to the procurator, nor, except for the case just mentioned, over Greek or Roman citizens. The power which Herod had claimed of appointing and removing high priests was exercised by the procurator, but the worship at Jerusalem was protected and encouraged, and everything reasonable was done to avoid offending Jewish susceptibilities. Augustus, who does not appear to have offered sacrifice in the temple when he visited the East during the reign of Herod, and specially commended Caius because he did not sacrifice during his visit, now endowed at his own cost a daily burnt offering of an ox and two lambs, and both he and the Empress Livia, and other members of his household, presented cups and vessels for the drink offering. The Jews in return offered two sacrifices daily, and on feast days hecatombs for the Emperor and Roman people at the cost of the nation. In the synagogues, also, prayers were said for the Emperor, and the fortunes of the Roman State commemorated so far as the law permitted. Some further authority over the worship of the temple was gained by the custody of the sacred garments of the high priests, which were preserved with great reverence in the castle of Antonia, and only given out on the great festivals.

For purposes of administration—probably both taxation and justice—Judæa was divided into eleven toparchies: Jerusalem, Gophna, and Akrabatta to the north; Thamna, Lydda, Emmaus, and Bethletepha to the west; Idumæa, Engaddi, and Herodeion to the south; and Jericho to the

east. The whole district of Samaria was probably under the city of Sebaste, and was governed by a senate. Whether at this period it was divided into toparchies we do not know. The remainder of the province was made up of the territory of Greek or quasi-Greek cities, such as Caesarea, Antipatris, Joppa, and Jamnia.

The danger of disturbance between the Romans and Jews was, as it appeared, greatest on the question of taxation. Up to this time the Jews had paid no direct taxes to the Empire, although certainly at some periods there had been a tribute imposed upon the country as a whole. The first step in the organization of a Roman province was the holding of a census, in order that a basis might be provided for taxation. It was for this purpose, in particular, that Quirinius was sent, but it must be pointed out that his commission was not confined to Palestine, but included the whole of Syria.¹ It is probable, therefore, that the occasion coincided with the regular census, which was held, so far as we can gather, every fourteen years, certainly in some provinces of the Empire and perhaps in all. There is nothing, therefore, that necessarily prevents a previous census having been held some fourteen years before this date over the whole of Syria.²

Recent discoveries in Egypt have provided us with a large amount of information on the subject of a Roman census, and we have considerable knowledge of the method by which it was carried on. No doubt, first of all, a proclamation was

¹ Josephus is quite clear on this point (*Antt.*, xvii., 355): ἀποτιμησόμενός τε τὰ ἐν Συρίᾳ καὶ τὸν Ἀρχελάου ἀποδωσόμενος οἶκον and he is corroborated by an inscription which states of a certain Q. Aemilius Secundus that "jussu Quirini censum egi Apamenae civitatis millium hominum civium CXVII."

² On the census see especially Mitteis and Wilcken, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyrskunde*, I., i., 185; ii., 231; Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, ii., 207 ff.; Kenyon, *Catalogue of the Greek and Roman Papyri in the British Museum*, ii., 19; Ramsay, *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* and *Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*; Schürer, *Geschichte*, i., 508, whose bibliography is very valuable; unfortunately, he is so determined to prove St. Luke wrong that he has made many unnecessarily dogmatic assertions which subsequent discovery has disproved. We owe the beginnings of new light to Kenyon, *Classical Review*, 1893, p. 110. The whole subject is still very difficult.

issued in the name of the governor or the commissioners appointed for the purpose, announcing that a census would be held. It was followed apparently by one summoning everyone to return to his own home for the purpose of being enrolled.¹ The census was of two kinds—the census of persons and the census of property. In the case of the one the head of the house made a declaration stating the names of all persons belonging to his house, in the other he enumerated all the property that he possessed. Both alike were made on oath, the terms of which were generally joined to the declaration. On the personal returns, which included everyone over fourteen, the poll tax and the liability to military service (from which apparently all Jews were exempt) were based; on the property returns the income tax and property tax. Such probably were the general characteristics of the census; what particular features may have characterized it as held in Syria and Judaea we cannot say.

This census caused great disturbances. No direct taxation had ever before been paid to the Romans, and even if there had been a census under Herod, whatever difficulties it may have caused it did not seem to imply foreign dominion. Now it was different, and there were serious signs of resentment. At some period of which we have no direct knowledge Joazar, son of Boethos, had been restored to the position of high priest, apparently through a definite popular demand. His influence over the people was sufficient to persuade the greater number to submit. The returns were made and the taxes paid. As it was at their own request that the Jews had been placed under direct Roman rule, it was characteristic of them that they should immediately resent it. Some remained obstinate. In particular one Judas, called the Galilaean, and a Pharisee of the name of Zadok became leaders of a revolt. They are reported to

¹ Here is an instance (Papyrus London iii., n. 904, p. 125, lines 18 ff., edd. Kenyon-Bell, see Mitteis and Wilcken, *op. cit.*, I., ii., p. 235): Γαίος Ουίβιος Μάξιμος ἑπαρχος Αἰγύπτου λέγει· Τῆς κατ' οἰκίαν ἀπογραφῆς ἐνεστῶσης ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστιν πᾶσιν τοῖς καθ' ἡντινα δὴποτε αἰτίαν ἀποδημοῦσιν ἀπὸ τῶν νομῶν προσαγγέλλεσθαι ἐπανελθεῖν εἰς τὰ ἐαυτῶν ἐφέστια, ἵνα καὶ τὴν συνήθη οἰκονομίαν τῆς ἀπογραφῆς πληρώσωσιν καὶ τῇ προσηκούσῃ αὐτοῖς γεωργίᾳ προσκαρτερήσωσιν.

have said that taxation was no better than slavery; they called on the nation to make an effort to renew their liberty, and said that failure would mean the honour of martyrdom. No one must expect divine help unless they were prepared to venture their lives and undertake heroic acts. The immediate result was unsuccessful. Not many joined the revolt. It was suppressed, and Judas was killed. But the seed sown bore evil fruit. Judas is styled the founder of the fourth sect of the Jews, who were named the Cananaeans or Zealots, and sometimes also, perhaps, Galilaeans.¹ They had, said Josephus, the same opinions as the Pharisees, but added to them an unquenchable attachment to liberty, and the principle that God alone was their Ruler and Lord. They made light of death; they cared nothing for the risk of exposing their friends or relations to suffering. Neither fear nor torture would make them call any man lord.

For a time the people acquiesced. Nothing happened to cause irritation, or to give power to the extreme party. The infection remained dormant. But later misgovernment increased. A series of bad procurators gave abundant occasion for discontent. The growth and development of Christianity added to the sense of failure and exasperation. The new generation became adherents of the doctrine of violence, and the terrible disorders of the last days of Judaism began. Josephus, as a patriotic Jew and a close observer of his country's fate, traces the beginning of all its misfortunes to the taxing of Quirinius and the teaching of Judas of Galilee. That is true enough, but had the Romans exercised a wise, strong, and good government, nothing of what happened need have been necessary. But Judaea became the prey of inferior officials, and the Emperors showed less and less wisdom as time went on in governing it. Religious fanaticism would have been powerless if it had not been helped by oppressive rule.

¹ The Galilaeans are mentioned among Jewish heretics (Justin, *Dialogue* 80, and Hegesippus *ap. Eus., H.E.*, iv., 22). The fact that this name was used of the sect implies that it may have that connotation in the Gospels and other places. The accusation of being a Galilaean would imply a suspicion of treason. The word "Cananaean" is the Hebrew form of *Ζηλωτής*.

Yet the issue was a fundamental one, and touched the innermost principles of Judaism. The strict Jew looked upon the theocracy as the only tolerable form of government. He would have no foreigner or native king to rule over him; but for many centuries he had had, with only a short period of independence, to submit to the inevitable force of circumstances. There were two possible lines of conduct. There were those who were content if they had freedom to live according to the law, and to have their lives regulated by their traditional customs. More than this they did not ask for. Politics, they held, did not concern them. They would acquiesce in foreign rule provided they had religious liberty. Then there were those also who never willingly acquiesced in any authority. In the Diaspora the Jew had learnt indifference to politics; he could practise his religion wherever he might be; many of those in Palestine were equally satisfied with a policy of non-resistance; the Essenes had always adopted a quietist attitude. But others hardened. We shall find that the right relations to Rome and the legitimacy of paying tribute were among the hard questions put to our Lord. The spread of Christianity helped to increase the bitterness. While many of the more pious and moderate Jews became Christians, their defection seemed to the more fanatical party disloyalty. The exactions of the Roman governors and their incapacity for dealing with such a turbulent people became intolerable. The two issues of Judaism became clear. The one implied a religious zeal which refused to recognize the restraint of reason or the teaching of wisdom, and led to anarchy and destruction; the other ended in spiritual sovereignty.

III

But for a time the evil issues were delayed. The first Roman procurator was Coponius (A.D. 6-9). The only event that is recorded under his rule exhibited the bitter feeling of the Samaritan for the Jew. It was the custom for the gates of the temple to be opened at the Passover shortly after midnight. Some Samaritans took advantage of this. They came secretly by night and brought into the temple a number of dead bodies which they threw about the cloisters,

thus defiling the temple and preventing the Passover from being duly celebrated. Henceforth the Jews excluded the Samaritans from the temple. Coponius was succeeded by Marcus Ambibulus (A.D. 9-12). Under him died Salome, Herod's old sister. She left all her possessions to Livia, the wife of Caesar—Jamnia, Phasaelis, and Archelais which seems to have come into her possession with its great grove of palm trees. This would not affect the political status of these towns. Ambibulus was succeeded by Annius Rufus (A.D. 12-15). No procurator so far had been in office for more than two or three years, but in A.D. 14 Augustus died, and was succeeded by Tiberius. He introduced a change which was designed in the interest of the provinces. He cynically observed that if a governor held office only a short time he would find himself obliged to plunder severely in order to get the wealth he desired; if he had a longer period of office the province would not have to satisfy so many claims and exactions would be less frequent.¹ During the whole of his reign he only appointed two governors for Palestine, Valerius Gratus (15-26) and Pontius Pilate (26-36). About this time a petition was received by the Emperor from the provinces of Palestine and Syria asking for a reduction of tribute. Whether it was granted we do not know.

During these years there had been constant change in the office of high priest. Archelaus had followed the arbitrary ways of his father, and the Roman procurators had claimed the same privileges. Archelaus had removed, as we have seen, Joazar, son of Boethus. He was unpopular with the stricter Jews because he had taken the place of Matthias, who was accused of sympathy with the Rabbis who had been burnt to death by Herod the Great, while Archelaus complained that he had helped the insurgents. In his place was appointed Eleazar his brother. He in no long time was removed and Jesus, son of See, was appointed in his place. How long he remained in that position we do not know. When Archelaus was exiled we find Joazar again in office, a position he had obtained by popular demand. He did good service to the Romans by persuading the people to

¹ He is reported to have said that it is better to leave a gorged fly on a sore than to drive it off (*Antt.*, xviii., 171-176).

acquiesce in the imposition of tribute, but this made him unpopular, so Quirinius appointed in his place Annas, the son of Sethi. He was the richest and most powerful member of the temple aristocracy. He held office for nine years, and six of his sons and his son-in-law Caiaphas all occupied that office. The family apparently obtained their wealth through the possession of booths or shops called the "booths of the sons of Annas," and the monopoly that they possessed of the sale of all the articles for sacrifice. These booths, or some of them, are said to have been erected in the temple courts. The wealth and avarice of the family aroused bitter resentment. "Woe to the house of Annas! Woe to their serpent-like hissings!" is a saying preserved in Jewish tradition. When disorder and violence increased and the Jewish people became exasperated, it was the house of Annas that was conspicuous for its violence and insolence.¹

For some reason not recorded Valerius Gratus deprived Annas of the high-priesthood. Probably he felt that he was too powerful. The next three, Ismail, son of Phiabi, Eleazar, son of Annas, and Simon, son of Kamithos, held office for little more than a year each; then Valerius appointed Joseph, called Caiaphas, who was son-in-law of Annas. He remained in office eighteen years (A.D. 18-36), and has attained an evil name in history. He was probably a man of little force of character, supple enough to keep on good terms with both the Roman rulers and his powerful father-in-law. The picture which is presented to us at this period of the highest and most sacred office of Judaism, incomplete though it is, is sufficient. It is not pleasing, and no doubt was one of the causes why the sacrificial system ceased to have any real hold on the religious life of the people.

In the year 26 Valerius Gratus was succeeded by Pontius Pilate. He was appointed under the influence of Sejanus, and Sejanus is said to have disliked the Jews. It is probable, therefore, that his conduct was the result not merely of cruelty and incapacity, but of policy. Certainly he succeeded in obtaining an evil reputation. He was said to be inflexible, merciless, and obstinate. We are told of his

¹ On the sons of Annas see Edersheim, *Life of Jesus the Messiah*, iii., 5; Derenbourg, p. 465; *Pesikta* 57a.

corruption, his insolence, his robberies, his outrages, his threats, the constant succession of indiscriminate murders, his intolerable and barefaced cruelty.¹ The language appears exaggerated, but incidents that are related show considerable justification for what is said.

It had always been the custom that the Roman troops should remove the images of the Emperors from their standards when they entered Jerusalem out of respect for the prejudices of the people. Pilate, with obvious deliberation, departed from this practice, and, when the troops arrived from Caesarea to Jerusalem to take up their winter quarters, they brought in by night the standards with the images still on them. As soon as this was known great numbers of Jews came down to Caesarea and tried to persuade him to remove them. He refused, pleading respect for the Emperor. They remained firm, so he determined to try force. He made secret preparations, summoned them before him in the open ground outside the city, and at a signal from him they were surrounded by armed soldiers. He threatened them with death; but their conduct disconcerted him. They threw themselves on the ground, bared their necks, and said that they would gladly die rather than allow the wisdom of their laws to be transgressed. Their inflexibility won, and the images were brought back to Caesarea.

He next attempted to benefit the city. He constructed or repaired an aqueduct to bring water from a distance of twenty-five miles. No doubt this was one of the aqueducts from Solomon's pools. To carry this out he made use of the temple treasure. The Jews were again displeased, and demanded with clamours and threats that he should leave off his designs. He lost his temper, and sent a number of soldiers among the people armed with clubs. These attacked with great violence, making no distinction between the guilty and the innocent. They killed some and wounded others, and suppressed the disturbance.

Another instance of his cruelty is mentioned in St. Luke's Gospel. Some Galilaeans—perhaps the word means merely natives of Galilee, perhaps followers of Judas of Galilee—had caused or taken part in disturbances at the feast. Pilate

¹ Philo, *Leg. ad Caium*, 38.

had again repressed disorder relentlessly, and in the impressive words of the Gospels he had mingled their blood with the sacrifices. They had probably been butchered in the temple.¹

A letter of Agrippa's quoted by Philo gives another instance of Pilate's tactlessness and of the difficulty of governing the Jews. He had put up in the palace of Herod at Jerusalem, now the official residence of the governor, golden shields in honour of Tiberius. This might seem sufficiently harmless. There were no images of any sort on them. They bore only the dedication and the name of the Emperor. But the Jews resented this, and associated with them in their protest the four sons of Herod and other members of his family. Both sides were obstinate. At length the Jews wrote to Tiberius, who ordered the shields to be placed in the temple of Augustus at Caesarea, thus preserving, as Agrippa points out, both the honour of the Emperor and the sanctity of the Jewish laws.²

It was an event in Samaria which finally brought his governorship to a close. A religious impostor had collected together a crowd of people on Mount Gerizim by promising to reveal the place where Moses had buried the sacred vessels. They assembled in great numbers, but when they attempted to go up the mountain they were attacked by a body of horsemen sent by Pilate. They were dispersed, many were slain, many taken prisoners, and all the more important of them were executed by Pilate's orders. The Samaritan senate sent an embassy to Vitellius, the governor of Syria, complaining of Pilate. They had had, they said, no intention of revolting against Rome. Vitellius sent a friend of his own, Marcellus, to act as procurator, and ordered Pilate to proceed to Rome to answer for his conduct to Tiberius. Before he arrived there Tiberius was dead. We know nothing of his subsequent history.³

It is noticeable that two of these incidents are only referred to in incidental allusions, and they suggest that there were others which have not been recorded. During all this

¹ Luke xiii. 1-5.

² Philo, *Leg. ad Caium*, loc. cit.

³ According to Cassiodorus he committed suicide: "His coss. Pilatus in multas incidens calamitates propria se manu interfecit."

period the record of Josephus is incomplete. Pilate was certainly unfit to govern Judaea. He was tactless, unsympathetic, obstinate, and weak; like other weak men, he was cruel and relentless. At the same time the difficulty of his position is obvious. The Jews were turbulent, suspicious, intolerant, and the impression is left on our minds that they were ceasing to be amenable to reason, that selfishness and fanaticism were rapidly getting the upper hand, and that all the material was being prepared which would burst out into flame at the great catastrophe.

IV

The remainder of Herod's dominions were divided into the two tetrarchies of Philip and Herod Antipas and the confederation of the Greek towns of the Decapolis.

The tetrarchy of Philip, the most northern part of the country, was formed of the districts of Trachonitis, Auranitis, Batanea, Gaulonitis, and Ituraea. It was often spoken of as Trachonitis or, as by St. Luke, Trachonitis and Ituraea. It was bounded on the north by the territory of Lysanias and by Damascus, on the east by the kingdom of the Nabataeans, on the south by Peraea and the cities of the Decapolis, on the west by the River Jordan and by Galilee. Trachonitis was the district in the north-east, and received its name and its character from the rugged lava of which it was composed. Auranitis, the modern Hauran, was the fertile plateau south of Damascus, through which ran then, as now, the pilgrim road by which the Babylonian Jews came to Jerusalem as the Mohammedan now goes to Mecca. Batanea occupied the low-lying valleys to the south-east in the upper waters of the Yarmuk. Gaulonitis—the modern Jaulan—lay on the east side of the Jordan northwards from the Sea of Galilee. Ituraea lay on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Hermon. The whole country was rich and well watered, the soil volcanic, the rainfall sufficient.¹ Formerly the territory of Zenodorus, a robber chief defeated by Herod, it had borne an evil reputation. The rocky and inaccessible defiles of Trachonitis had been the lurking-place of bands of robbers;

¹ On the character of this transjordanic region see G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 609.

the more open country was overrun by the desert Arabs; so great was the insecurity that the people dwelt not in cities, but in the safer seclusion of caves, in which the district abounded. Augustus had given it to Herod, who immediately attacked the evil with all his fierce energy. He waged continuous war against robbers and Arabs alike. He took steps to secure a settled and industrious population. "The inhabitants of Trachonitis," says Josephus, "after Caesar had added the country to Herod, were no longer able to rob, but were forced to plough the land and live quietly, which was a thing they did not like."¹ While Herod was in Rome they took advantage and revolted, and Herod inflicted a bloody punishment upon them. In order to pacify the country he settled 3,000 Idumaeans in it, transferring the robbers to Idumaea. At a later date he established in Batanea a colony of Babylonian Jews. A certain Zamaris had come out of Babylonia with a large following, men trained in Parthian fashion to shoot arrows on horseback. Herod granted them land free of taxes. They built strongholds and villages, and guarded the pilgrims' way south of Damascus. The country thus secured and settled speedily attracted a large Jewish immigration, and cultivation spread. When Zamaris died he was succeeded by a son, Jacimus, and he by one whose name, Philip, records the friendly relations which existed with the Tetrarch. These Babylonian Jews provided the ruler with a bodyguard, and protected the country.

Thus were laid the foundations of the well-being of this region. New towns sprang up, the inhabitants left their caves and retreats, the land—a rich corn district—was cultivated. The frontier towards the desert was guarded by the Nabataeans, who were obliged to show respect towards the Roman peace. Then, when Trajan guarded and fortified the frontier by the establishment of the province of Arabia, the great period of prosperity began.

For thirty-seven years (4 B.C. to A.D. 34) Trachonitis was governed by Philip with wisdom and moderation. Unlike the other sons of Herod, he was neither cruel nor avaricious nor tyrannical. One characteristic of his father he inherited

¹ Josephus, *Antt.*, xvi., 271.

—like him, he was a builder. At Paneas, where the Jordan in full stream bursts forth from a great cave and rushes down in cataracts to the valley, a place of great beauty and natural sanctity, where Herod had built a white marble temple in honour of Augustus, on the southern slopes of Hermon, he founded Caesarea Philippi;¹ further south, at the head of the Lake of Galilee, he transformed the village of Bethsaida into a city, and named it Julias in honour of the daughter of Augustus. He lived on friendly terms with the two Emperors, Augustus and Tiberius, and was the first member of his family to place their effigies on his coins, a clear sign that a large portion of the population was heathen.² He married Salome, his niece, the daughter of Herodias and his brother Herod. His reign was as uneventful as it appears to have been happy, and Josephus concludes his account of him with the following panegyric:

“He had shown himself a man of moderation and quietness in his government. He lived regularly in his own

¹ G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, p. 473: “Paneas lies scarcely an hour to the north of Tell-el-Kadi. From the latter you pass a well-watered meadow, covered by trees, and then a broad terrace with oaks, like an English park, till you come to the edge of a deep gorge, through which there roars a headlong stream, half stifled by bush. An old Roman bridge takes you over, and then through a tangle of trees, brushwood, and fern you break into sight of a high cliff of limestone reddened by the water that oozes over its face from the iron soil above. In the cliff is a cavern. Part of the upper rock has fallen, and from the *débris* of boulders and shingles below there bursts and bubbles along a line of 30 feet a full-born river. The place is a very sanctuary of waters, and from time immemorial men have drawn near it to worship. As you stand within the charm of it—and this is a charm not uncommon in the Lebanon—you understand why the early Semites adored the Baalim of the subterranean waters even before they raised their gods to heaven, and thanked them for the rain.”

² On the coins of Philip, see Hill, *Catalogue, etc., Palestine*, xcvi., 228, plate xxiv., 19-21; Madden, *Coins of the Jews*, 123-127. “The effigy of the Roman Emperor on these coins was a grave infringement of the Mosaic law. But it has been suggested that this infraction took place at some distance from the centre of religion, in a town inhabited for the most part by Greeks.” The coins were probably struck at Caesarea Philippi, as on one in the British Museum Philip describes himself as *κτιστής* (founder).

country, and made constant progresses through it with a small retinue, and always was accompanied on his journeys by the tribunal on which he administered justice. Whenever anyone met him who appealed for his assistance, he made no delay, but had the tribunal at once set down wherever he might happen to be, and, sitting upon it, heard the complaint. The guilty when convicted he punished, those unjustly accused he acquitted."¹

He died at Julias, and was buried with great pomp in the tomb he had built for himself (A.D. 34).

Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee and Peraea. Galilee, divided into Upper and Lower, stretched from the great gorge of the Litany to the southern edge of the plain of Esdraelon, and from the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee to the territory of the maritime cities Ptolemais and Tyre. Upper Galilee was a region of fertile tablelands, more than 2,000 feet above the sea, sloping down from Lebanon; Lower Galilee a region of broad valleys with low hills between them, ending in the plain of Esdraelon. It was a rich and fertile land. Its people were brave and hardy, and distinguished in the Great War for their loyalty, their patriotism, and their endurance.

"These two Galilees," says Josephus, "of so great largeness and encompassed with so many nations of foreigners, have always shown great resolution in war. The country has never suffered from want of courage in its men or smallness of population, for it is rich and fruitful and abounds in every sort of trees. The whole is well cultivated, and no part lies idle. Its cities and villages are very numerous and thickly populated."

He estimates the population in his day at 3,000,000, perhaps an exaggerated computation.²

The district of Peraea was that part of the territory beyond Jordan which was situated between the River Arnon on the south and the Yarmuk on the north, except such portions as formed the territory of the Greek cities. On

¹ Josephus, *Antt.*, xviii., 106-108.

² Josephus gives a full description of Galilee in *B.J.*, iii., 35-43. For a description of the scenery see G. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, chap. xx., p. 411.

the east it was bounded, harassed, or defended by the kingdom of the Nabataeans. An elevated and healthy district, it was, says Josephus, compared with Galilee, uncultivated and thinly populated, and not suitable for growing the more delicate fruits. Yet it was not unfertile. "It has a moist soil," he says, "and produces all kinds of fruits. Its plains are planted with trees, especially the olive, the vine, and the palm. It is well watered with torrents from the mountains and springs that never fail." It is a land of fruit and forest trees, of flocks and herds.¹

Over these two districts Herod Antipas ruled for forty-three years (4 B.C. to A.D. 39). He was, like his father, violent and tyrannical, crafty—our Lord designates him as "that fox"—and fond of luxury, but he was less energetic. He succeeded in governing his tetrarchy with a reasonable amount of success. A founder of cities, he restored the ruined Sepphoris, which he named Autocratoris. Later it became Diocaesarea. On the eastern side of Jordan he fortified the old settlement of Betharamphtha, which was named Livias and Julias after the wife of Augustus. Later he built, as the capital of his tetrarchy, Tiberias, named after the Emperor. He selected the most beautiful and attractive spot on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, near the hot springs of Emmaus. But he encountered unexpected difficulties. A portion of the site was discovered to have been a graveyard, and the stricter Jews refused—at any rate for some time—to live there. So in order to secure sufficient population he collected men of every degree, not only from Galilee but other countries, tempting them to settle by building them excellent houses. It was a city of great beauty, built in the Greek fashion, with fine colonnades and public buildings, with marble statues, in particular with the largest synagogue in Galilee. The palace of Herod himself, which he built there, was of great magnificence and rich in treasure.²

¹ On Peraea see *B. J.*, iii., 44-47; G. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, chaps. xxiv.-xxvii.

² On Tiberias see Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 447 ff.; Schürer, *Geschichte*, ii., 216; Josephus, *Vita*, 65, 68, 85 ff., 277. Of the palace it is said, τὸν οἶκον τὸν ὑπὸ Ἡρώδου τοῦ τετράρχου κατασκευασθέντα ζῶντων μορφὰς ἔχοντα τῶν νόμων οὕτως τι κατασκευάζειν ἀπαγορευόντων. Its gilded roof and rich

Of the events of Herod's life we have for some time little record. He had married a daughter of Aretas, King of the Nabataeans—a politic action, for friendly relations with the Arabs were most necessary for the well-being of the country. He lived with her many years, but once, on his way to Rome, about A.D. 29, he stayed with his brother Herod, the son of the second Mariamne. This Herod had married his niece Herodias, daughter of Aristobulus, who was a woman at this time between thirty and forty. She appears, as her career shows, to have been ambitious and unscrupulous, malicious and revengeful. With her Antipas fell in love. She persuaded him to promise to marry her, and to divorce his own wife, the daughter of Aretas. The latter discovered his intentions. She managed to arrange that she should be sent to Machaerus, the fortress of Herod on the southern boundary of his kingdom, and from there escaped to her father. This was the beginning of strained relations between Herod and Aretas. A boundary dispute aggravated the irritation, and a war followed between the two countries, clearly inconsistent with the authority of the Roman Empire. Neither king took the field in person, and the army of Antipas, it is said owing to treachery, was defeated about A.D. 32. It is possible that this is the incident to which our Lord refers when he speaks of a ruler going to war without counting the cost. "What king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him that cometh against him with 20,000?"¹ Aretas probably had been the aggressor. He was clearly, to a certain extent, the wronged party, and Antipas, we know, was of an indolent and unenterprising character. Aretas had, therefore, been guilty of violating the Roman peace, and Antipas wrote to Tiberius to complain.

Tiberius did not interfere at once, for circumstances in

furniture are mentioned: *λυχνίαι δ' ἦσαν Κορίνθιαι ταῦτα καὶ τράπεζαι τῶν βασιλικῶν καὶ ἀσήμον ἀργυρίου σταθμὸς ἱκανός*. Josephus showed great energy in trying to save this. The synagogue was a large building: *εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν μέγιστον οἶκημα καὶ πολλὸν ὄχλον ἐπιδέξασθαι δυνάμενον*. The hot springs are mentioned by Pliny, *N.H.*, v., 15.

¹ Lk. xiv. 31.

the east compelled delay.¹ There were difficulties in Parthia which threatened to be serious, and thither first Vitellius, the Governor of Syria, had to turn; the Roman army was concentrated on the banks of the Euphrates, and Herod, as an allied ruler, was summoned with his troops. He was present when the treaty of peace was made between Rome and Artabanus, King of Parthia (A.D. 36). The two parties met, as was customary, in the middle of a bridge thrown across the Euphrates; there Herod, emulating the magnificence of his father, had erected a sumptuous tent, and entertained the Parthian King and the Roman Proconsul at a great banquet. In order to ingratiate himself also with Tiberius, he sent special messengers with the news of the conclusion of the treaty, and these arrived before the official messengers sent by Vitellius. This may have pleased the Emperor, but it irritated (as Herod afterwards discovered) the Governor, and the Governor outlived the Emperor.

When the affairs of Parthia were settled the Syrian legions were free for other work, and Vitellius was directed to punish Aretas. As he was annoyed with Antipas he did not hurry. With an army consisting of two legions and auxiliary troops he began his march through Judaea, but the Jews requested him to desist, as the land would be contaminated by the images on the standards. He readily complied with their request, and sent his army to the Plain of Esdraelon, while he went to Jerusalem, offered sacrifices, and arranged other matters. While he was there a messenger came informing him of the death of Tiberius (March 16, A.D. 37), and he immediately gave up the expedition.

The Emperor's death was to have an unfortunate influence on the career of Antipas. Agrippa, a son of Aristobulus, who had been in disgrace with Tiberius and kept in prison, was an intimate personal friend of Caligula, the new Emperor. He was immediately set at liberty and given the tetrarchy of Philip (which since Philip's death in A.D. 34 had been administered directly by Rome) with the title of King. The honour thus conferred on him roused the jealousy and ambition of his sister Herodias. When she went with her

¹ On the dates of these events, which have some bearing on the Gospel chronology, see the Note on Chronology.

husband to Jerusalem at the time of the feasts she could not endure the symbols of royal dignity with which her brother and his wife were adorned, and was determined that her husband, too, should be King. He was naturally reluctant to do anything, but she was insistent. So Herod and Herodias and a large retinue went off to Rome that he might obtain this new honour. Agrippa, however, showed his family affection by defeating this plan. He sent off a messenger of his own to the Emperor, who travelled with great celerity and took information accusing Antipas of having conspired with Sejanus against Tiberius, and now of a treacherous agreement with Artabanus. As a proof of this statement it was alleged that Antipas had prepared the equipment for an army of 70,000 men. There seems to have been some truth in this last allegation, and Antipas could not deny it. So Caligula deprived him of his tetrarchy and all his property, and banished him to Lyons in Gaul, giving his territory to Agrippa. It may be said to the credit of Herodias that, although Caligula was prepared to treat her with kindness as sister of Agrippa, she preferred to be true to the husband on whom she had brought so many misfortunes, and followed him into banishment.

In reviewing the reigns of these two tetrarchs—Antipas and Philip—during what was, we know, so critical a period in the history of Judaism, we shall notice as the most striking feature the absence of disturbance and sedition. So far as our accounts go during all this time Galilee, Peraea, and Trachonitis were free from any unrest or sedition, and it is hardly likely that any event of great importance should have escaped the knowledge of Josephus. It was not that the Galilaeans were not capable of resistance; later, when war broke out with Rome, they were among the most seditious. Though the home of Judas the Zealot, Galilee had not to pay taxes to Rome, so no disturbance had yet taken place there. Although deep religious passions existed, they were for a time dormant, and during these years the country enjoyed, to an unusual extent, peace and prosperity. There was but slight danger of attacks from without, order was well preserved, the land increased in wealth, and those who would might turn their thoughts to higher things.

A fourth division of Palestine was constituted by the Decapolis.¹ This term denoted, not a homogeneous stretch of country, but a league of Greek cities. Each of these had its own territory,² stretching in some cases over a considerable area; each its own constitution, its rights, and privileges. Their boundaries would be settled by tradition or by definite deeds and grants. They might have acquired, by treaty, rights of water or pasturage. They were associated with one another by common interests and obligations. But the different cities did not necessarily march with one another, and they were separated by territory which belonged to the tetrarchy. The majority of these cities had been founded in the early days of the Macedonian conquest, they had suffered from the religious zeal of the Maccabees, and they most of them owed their freedom to Pompey, from whose expedition they dated their era. A league of Greek cities in the midst of a barbarian and unsympathetic population, they were bound together by their common Hellenism, by Hellenic culture, life, and religion.

The cities of the Decapolis were Scythopolis, the ancient Bethshan on the western side of the Jordan, guarding the entrance to the Plain of Esdraelon; on the eastern side Hippos, Gadara, and Pella, whose territories were contiguous; on the road which ran south from Pella were Dium, Gerasa, and Philadelphia—the ancient Rabbath Ammon; on the road west from Gadara, Raphana and Kanatha, which lay at the foot of the Jebel Hauran; finally, to the north was Damascus.

The sites of these cities are remarkable at the present day for the striking ruins of the empire that they preserve. Their theatres, their amphitheatres, their temples still stand in ruined magnificence; their aqueducts stretch for miles across the country; their bridges and their roads survive as memorials of a past when the country was civilized; their

¹ On the Decapolis see G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, chap. xxviii.; Schürer, *Geschichte*⁴, ii., 148 ff.

² We have the territory of Hippos mentioned under the name of Hippene (Ἰππηνή), *B.J.*, iii., 37; of Gadara, Gadaritica (Γαδαρίτις), *B.J.*, iii., 542; of Philadelphia, Philadelphene (Φιλαδελεηνή), *B.J.*, iii., 47.

great columned streets may still be traced; at Gerasa there are still 200 columns standing. One may wander still among the side streets, and see the remains of shop and store and private dwelling-place.¹

They were strongholds of Hellenism in a Jewish land. Their gods were Greek—Zeus and Pallas, Heracles, Dionysus, Artemis; their language was Greek; they were the homes of men famous in Greek literature. From Gadara came Philodemus the epicurean, Meleager the epigrammatist, Menippus the satirist, Theodorus the rhetorician. Galilee, says Josephus, was surrounded by foreign nations. It is not without significance that within sight of the Sea of Galilee, on the hills above the valley of the Jordan, might be seen the signs of the religion and culture of the Greek

¹ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 603: "Approach any of these sites of the Decapolis, and this is the order in which you are certain to meet with their remains. Almost at the moment at which your eye catches a cluster of columns, or the edge of an amphitheatre against the sky, your horse's hoofs will clatter upon pavement. You cannot ride any more. You must walk up this causeway, which the city laid out far from its gates. You must feel the clean tight slabs of basalt, so well laid at first that most of them lie square still. You must draw your hand along the ruts worn deep by the chariot wheels of fifteen, eighteen centuries ago. If the road runs between banks there will be tombs in the limestone, with basalt lintels, and a Roman name on them in Greek letters, perhaps a basalt or a limestone sarcophagus, flung out on the road by some Arab hunter for treasure. If it is a waterless site like Gadara you will find an aqueduct running with the road, the pipes hewn out of solid basalt, with a diameter like our drain pipes, and fitting to each other, as these do, with flanges. But if it be the more characteristic site by a stream, you will come to a bridge, one of those narrow parapetless Roman bridges which were the first to span the Syrian rivers, and have had so few successors. You reach the arch, or heap of ruins, that marks the old gateway. Within is an open space, probably the forum, and from this right through the city you can trace the line of the long colonnaded street. Generally nothing but the bases of the columns remains, as *in the street called Straight* of Damascus, or as at Gadara; but at Philadelphia ten or twelve columns still stand to their full height, and in the famous street of Gerasa nearly two hundred. This last street was lined by public and private buildings with very rich façades. At Gadara you can still see a by-street with plain vaulted buildings, probably stores or bazaars. The best preserved buildings, however, are the amphitheatres, the most beautiful are the temples."

world, and that Greek language and thought were permeating even Jewish life.¹

Such was the political condition of Palestine at the time when it was to be the scene of the greatest events in the world's history. Let us cast an eye for a moment on the neighbouring countries. The safety of Palestine depended largely on the Arabian kingdom which guarded the desert frontier. From the year 9 B.C. to the year A.D. 40 it was governed by Aretas IV. The only event of importance recorded of his reign has already been related, but he has left an interesting memorial of himself in the numerous coins that he issued. They imply considerable commercial vigour and prosperity, and the inscriptions upon many of them are an indication of the character of his reign. The title by which he calls himself is "Charithath, King of the Nabataeans, Lover of His People." This is not a meaningless title. It implies that he wishes to be known, not as Lover of Greece, Lover of Rome, or Lover of Caesar—such names were eagerly sought by these client princes—but as lover of his own country.²

To the north of Palestine still remained some of the smaller principalities through whom the mountain tribes were governed. Abilene, a portion of the Ituraean territory, had as Tetrarch a Lysanias, a member of the same family as the Lysanias of the times of Herod and perhaps a son of Zenodorus.³ Of the neighbouring Chalcis at this time we

¹ G. A. Smith, p. 607: "The temples of Zeus, Pallas, and Astarte crowned a height opposite to that which gave its name to the Sermon on the Mount. Bacchus, under his Greek name, ruled the territory down the Jordan valley to Scythopolis. There was another temple to Zeus on the other side of Galilee at Ptolemais, almost within sight of Nazareth. We cannot believe that the two worlds, which this one landscape embraced, did not break into each other."

² On Aretas IV. see Schürer, *Geschichte*, i., 736; on the coins Head, *Hist. Num.*², p. 811; Gutschmid, *Verzeichniss der nabatäische Könige*, in Euting, *Nabatäische Inschriften aus Arabia* (Berlin, 1885), Hill, *British Museum Catalogue*, Arabia, etc.

³ On this Lysanias see Schürer, *Geschichte*, i., 717. The existence of a younger Lysanias, contemporary with our Lord, is proved both by Josephus and by inscriptions; the opposite opinion is maintained by Schmidt in an article in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, iii., 2842, which exhibits all the wrongheadedness which makes that publication so

have no knowledge, and Commagene, to the north of Syria, had now been joined to the province, but Arethusa and Emesa still preserved a measure of independence.

The great question always present in the East was that of the Parthian Empire and the Euphrates. It never ceased to cause agitation, and it always remained a problem. The imperial policy formulated by Augustus had fixed the limits beyond which the Empire was not to advance, and he always refused to deal in a thorough manner with the Parthian question. Whether he was right or not is one of those questions which may provoke endless and inconclusive discussion, but a different policy might have had a profound influence on the future of the world. The Roman policy aimed at securing its frontier by making its neighbours weak. Parthia was continually torn by domestic dissensions, which were largely fomented by the undignified intrigues of the Emperor. Rome did not desire to cross the Euphrates, and the buffer state of Armenia provided a certain mild antagonism between the two great empires. While the Governor of Syria was in normal times entrusted with the administration of the Euphrates front, and it was only in Syria that legions were stationed, from time to time members of the imperial family were entrusted with special missions. Under the guidance of an experienced statesman and general they visited the famous cities of the ancient world, and marched with an army into Armenia, whose capture they celebrated. There was sometimes fighting, and the expedition concluded by a meeting on a bridge over the Euphrates and a solemn treaty which neither side had the intention to observe or the courage to break. So in the year 1 B.C. came Caius Caesar, and twenty years later Germanicus.

After a period of domestic and national strife a Median, not of the royal house, who is known as Artabanus III., ruled in Parthia from A.D. 10 to 40. His reign was followed by another period of domestic dissension, and for the time the Eastern menace was dead. To the land of Syria, which

untrustworthy and even ridiculous. The determination to prove, in the face of obvious evidence, that the New Testament is wrong is considered by many persons a sign of unbiassed research.

always bore the first impetus of a hostile invasion, the terror of the Parthian cavalry was very vivid. The memory of the great disaster of Crassus still survived, and the important fact at this period was that through the wise and cautious, if uninspiring, policy of Augustus the fear seemed gone. A prospect of profound peace reigned in the East. Not yet had the angel "poured out his vial upon the Euphrates, and the waters thereof been dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings of the East that come from the sun-rising."¹

V

It is related by St. Luke that when Jesus had reached the age of twelve He went up with His parents to the Passover at Jerusalem, and that when they returned He stayed behind and was found in the temple sitting among the teachers, hearing them and asking them questions. It appears that it was a custom at the festivals and Sabbaths for members of the Sanhedrin to give public instruction on the law on the terrace of the temple, and it is probable that an occasion like this is referred to.² The historian Josephus tells us a similar story about himself. While he was still a boy about fourteen years of age, he was the object of universal praise for his love of learning, and the chief priests and great men of the city came together at times to receive an accurate exposition from him on points of law.³ The contrast between the conceit of the historian and the modest claims of the Evangelist is certainly remarkable, but the story told by Josephus may suggest that the narrative of St. Luke is not so improbable as has been supposed. That Jesus, as He increased in wisdom and stature, should desire to learn the true mean-

¹ Rev. xvi. 12.

² On this incident see Edersheim, *Life of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i., chap. x. The extent to which these early incidents recorded in Jerusalem are historical must always be doubtful, but there is nothing improbable, certainly nothing impossible, in the story. Even those who deny the divine character of Christ must recognize that He was certainly one who, at any period of His life, must have been remarkable alike for religious piety and intelligence.

³ Josephus, *Life*, § 9: ἔτι δ' ἀντίπαις ὧν περὶ τεσσαρεσκαίδεκατον ἔτος διὰ τὸ φιλογράμματον ὑπὸ πάντων ἐπηνούμην συνιόντων αἰτ' τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως πρώτων ὑπὲρ τοῦ παρ' ἐμοῦ περὶ τῶν νομίμων ἀκριβέστερόν τι γινῶναι.

ing of the law in which He was being instructed was probable enough, and this incident will make us desire to know who were the teachers who at this time were the official exponents of the religion of Israel.

The Jews in our Lord's day were an educated nation. Probably the vast majority could read and write. They were taught to read the Scriptures, and learnt the principles of their religion. That was for many their interest in life, and they would desire to gain as much information and as accurate knowledge as circumstances allowed. The machinery consisted of the synagogue, the elementary school attached to the synagogue, and the higher school or University. The one school was called the *Beth-ha-Sepher*, the other the *Beth-ha-Midrash*. The relation of the two may be learnt from a Rabbinical commentary on Genesis, which teaches us the later custom. "Esau and Jacob," it said, "went together until they had passed the thirteenth year, when they parted, the former entering the house of idols, and the latter the *Beth-ha-Midrash*."¹ The synagogue and the elementary school were found throughout Palestine, and all Jewish boys could have the opportunity of learning. The local courts of justice and the synagogue would imply the presence of scribes and teachers trained in the law in every important town, and much discussion and teaching about the law and the meaning of the Scriptures would prevail everywhere, but it would all depend upon the great school at Jerusalem. It was here that scribes and teachers were trained, here the great Rabbis taught, and from here decisions went out to the strict and devout Jews throughout Israel. If we may trust later tradition, there was a great school or schools—*Beth-ha-Midrash-ha-Gadol*—situated in the temple, probably somewhere under the porticoes by which it was surrounded. Here was the centre from which the growth and development of Judaism were disseminated.²

¹ Gen. k., lxiii. 10.

² On the organization of Jewish schools and learning see Schürer, *Geschichte*, vol. ii., §§ 26, 27, with the references there given. See also article on *Bait-ha-Midrash* in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. iii., 116 ff.

It is our task now to give some account of the characteristics of Rabbinical teaching at this time. It is one which it is difficult to perform with accuracy. Our earliest sources concerning it are those contained in the Mishna, which was not written down until the end of the second century, nearly two hundred years later; and although we may recognize that the later date may be compensated for by the great power of memory developed in the schools, by the training of each student to learn by heart the decisions and teaching of his instructors, and by the weight laid on the scrupulous preservation of tradition, yet a study of the contents of Jewish literature will convince us that even men with trained memories will tend to remember things as they wish, and make us distrust the historical accuracy of the compilers. We feel ourselves in the presence of a singular type of mind. There is an absence of any historical sense. Instead of history or biography there are stories often trivial and absurd. A desire for what seems edification entirely overpowers any conception of historical truth. The present is read into the past, which is reconstructed on *a priori* lines. It is noticeable that the further our sources are removed from the event recorded, the fuller they become. The history is often neither edifying nor trustworthy, but it has another sort of truth. It enables us to form a not unfaithful conception of the manner of mind and teaching exhibited by the Rabbis. In what follows we shall quote both the story and the tradition, with the conviction that, if not always verbally true, the general picture that it presents is faithful.¹

At the beginning of the Christian era the great name of

¹ The English reader may gain some direct conception of the character of Rabbinical teaching from translations of the Talmud: *Eighteen Treatises of the Mishna*, translated by De Sola and Raphall (ed. London, 1845); Barclay, *The Talmud* (London, 1878); *Pirke Aboth*, translated by Dr. C. Taylor (Cambridge, 1897), and in Charles, *Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic Literature*, vol. ii., pp. 686-741, ed. Herford. The only important Haggadic work of which I know an English translation is the *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, by Gerald Friedlander (London: Kegan Paul, 1916). On the literature of the subject generally see Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*.

the Rabbinical schools was that of Hillel,¹ the founder of the traditional exegesis. He was, we are told, a Jew of Babylon,² of the seed of David. He had progressed far in learning in the schools of his own home, and so great was his enthusiasm for the study of the law that he had travelled to Jerusalem in order to add what its doctors might have to teach to his own learning. He had to endure the severest poverty. By working at his trade he earned a *victoriatius* a day—about 5d. On half of it he supported his family; with the other half he was able to pay his entrance fee for the lectures of Shemaiah and Abtalion. One Sabbath eve in winter he had no money to pay his entrance fee, so he climbed up into the window that he might hear all that was said. Unable to bear the intense cold he fainted. The lecture lasted all night, and he was only discovered in the morning, when it was noted how slowly the morning light penetrated into the school house. They found him lying insensible, buried in the snow. He was extricated and revived. As the students performed this charitable work they remarked characteristically: "He is worthy that on his account the Sabbath should be broken." In process of time this poor student became the head of the Rabbinical schools and the fountain-head of Jewish theology.

He was clearly a man of strong character. He was devoted to the study of the law, but he had less than other Rabbis of the harshness and bitterness which so often seems to have characterized them. He was gentle in disposition, displayed a caustic but not unkind wit. He was leader of the more moderate school of Theology, and laid down the principles

¹ On Hillel by far the best account that I have been able to find is that of Ewald, *History of Israel*, E.T., vol. vi., p. 21, and that is incomplete. See also Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*², vol. i., 1-10; art. Hillel, *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. vi., p. 397; Schürer, *op. cit.*, p. 424 ff., and the literature there cited; Delitzsch, *Jesus and Hillel*, in *Jewish Artisan Life*, E.T. (London, 1877). There does not appear to have been any scholarly and complete investigation of his life and the traditions about him.

² It is a characteristic example of the way the Rabbis write history that they described him as having lived for three periods of forty years, the first in Babylon, the second as learner in Jerusalem, the third as head of the Rabbinical school. The object of such history was to make his life parallel to that of Moses.

on which in later generations the law continued to be interpreted. These characteristics are revealed by the sayings recorded in *Pirke Aboth*.¹ "Be of the disciples of Aaron," he said, "one that loves peace, that pursues peace, that loves mankind and brings them nigh to the Torah." "Say not: when I am at leisure I will study: perchance thou shalt not be at leisure." He exhibits that scorn of the ignorant which was undoubtedly a characteristic of the Rabbis: "No uneducated man is quick to shrink from sin, no man of the people is religious." "No one devoted to trade becomes wise." There is a certain shrewd wisdom in the following maxim: "No one who is too timid learns well, and no one who is too angry teaches well." His cynical view of common life, and his exaltation of learning are contrasted in the following maxim: "The more flesh one hath, the more worms; the more treasures the more care; the more women the more superstition; the more maidservants the more unchastity; the more menservants the more theft; the more law the more life; the more schools of law the more wisdom; the more counsel the more insight; the more righteousness the more peace. If one gains a good name, one gains it for oneself; if one gains knowledge of the law, one gains the life to come."

The great rival and opponent of Hillel was Shammai,² and many of the stories which are related turn on the contrast between the two. "Let a man be always gentle like Hillel, and not hasty like Shammai." Shammai is always depicted as teaching the law in its harshest and most rigid aspect. While Hillel attracted proselytes, Shammai drove them away: "The passionateness of Shammai sought to drive us out of the world; the gentleness of Hillel has brought us under the wings of the divine glory." This was illustrated by many stories somewhat puerile in character, and one of them embodies Hillel's most famous saying. "A heathen came to Shammai with the request that he would accept him as a proselyte, and teach him the whole law while he was standing on one foot. Shammai drove him away with the

¹ See *Pirke Aboth*, chap. i., §§ 12-14; ii., §§ 5-8.

² On Shammai see Schürer, *op. cit.*, pp. 424, 425, and the references there given.

measuring rod which he had in his hand. Hillel accepted him and said: 'That which is to thee hateful do not to the neighbour. This is the whole law; the rest is commentary; go away and practise it.'"¹

It seems characteristic of the Rabbinical tradition that it should put together in this way the ridiculous and the sublime without seeing the incongruity.² The story seems to belong to the later days of Judaism, when no great thoughts or deeds stirred the minds of the narrow circle of pedants who composed the Mishna and the Gemara. It does not harmonize with the religious earnestness of the school which trained St. Paul or hardened the nation for the last great revolt. We may dismiss the story as legendary, and accept the maxim as historical. It is based upon the teaching of the Old Testament. It is found in a slightly different form in the book of Tobit: "What thou thyself hatest do to no man." It has its parallel amongst heathen writers; and it may be held to represent the highest point which a sober and somewhat utilitarian morality may attain. Hillel showed clear insight in seeing that here was the essential point of the law of which perhaps it represents the highest attainment, but there is a wide difference between what he taught and the Christian ethic which puts the rule before us in its positive and not in its negative side, turns it into a great imperative of moral enthusiasm, and allows it to permeate all teaching and life. As we read the other recorded sayings of Hillel and his school, nothing ever reminds us that he had once had the intuition to see where the root of law and morality lies; as we read the Christian tradition we never feel far from its great law of Love.³

¹ These stories of the proselytes who came to Hillel and Shammai are given in full in Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 22. They come from *Shabbath*, fol. 30b and 31a.

² A custom seems to have prevailed in the Rabbinical schools of preserving, exaggerating, or inventing stories illustrating the character and idiosyncrasies of leading men, much in the same way as in Oxford or Cambridge stories partly true, partly untrue, are told. In both cases, even if historically the evidence be doubtful, there is no doubt of their poetic truth.

³ On this maxim of Hillel's by far the best exposition from the Jewish point of view is that of Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism*, "The Greatest Commandment," p. 19 (Cambridge, 1917). The Christian

If on this point Hillel approached near to the teaching of Christ, on other points he was far removed from it. While Shammai and his school maintained that no one should divorce his wife except for unchastity, Hillel apparently himself, and certainly his school, allowed divorce for any cause, "even if she spoiled his food," and it is noted that Rabbi Aqiba at the end of the century said, "even if he find another woman more beautiful." But it is pointed out that these were intended to be rather theoretical rules asserting the abstract right of the husband than recommendations of what should actually be done. Hillel would prevent divorce by compelling the husband to return the whole of the wife's dowry.¹

The most striking maxim recorded of Shammai seems to imply his severity: "Make thy Torah a fixed duty; say little and do much: and receive every man with the look of a cheerful face." Stories were circulated telling how rigidly he carried out the law. He is said to have wanted to make his son, while still a child, conform to the law concerning fasting on the day of Atonement, and when his daughter-in-law gave birth to a boy on the Feast of Tabernacles, he was said to have broken through the roof of the chamber in which she lay in order to make a *Sukkah*, or booth, of it, so that the new-born child might keep the festival. Yet while Hillel would teach the law to all, Shammai would only teach it to those who were wise, humble, and of godly, well-to-do parentage.

It was as the founder of Jewish exegesis, and as laying down—in a more systematic manner than had hitherto been done—the principles on which it developed, that Hillel probably exercised the greatest influence on posterity, an influence which really counteracted any more liberal elements there may have been in his teaching. The purpose of this exegesis was, it must be remembered, primarily the inter-

need not hesitate to recognize the highest point attained by Rabbinical exegesis, for the fact will always remain that Christian morality has always been built on this principle, and Rabbinical teaching has not.

¹ See on this Abrahams, *op. cit.*, "Jewish Divorce in the First Century" p. 66.

pretation of the law as a rule of life. When once the conception of a fixed law as ruling life has been attained, some authority that can declare and interpret the law becomes necessary, and that authority requires rules for its guidance. The first necessity in the case of the Jewish law arose from the conflict of rules. When there was an apparent discrepancy between different passages in the Pentateuch, it required a careful exegesis to reconcile them. The second difficulty arose from the fact that any law, if it is rigidly applied, becomes impossible. The law has to be interpreted so as to harmonize with the facts of life. How can its severity be mitigated? The third difficulty arose from the incompleteness of the law. No code could ever cover every case; how, then, could new cases be decided? In order, therefore, to adapt the law to all these cases, a recognized system of interpretation was required.¹ It was this that Hillel came from Babylon to learn at the feet of Shemaiah and Abtalion; this he taught himself; and his principles were embodied in seven rules which, afterwards expanded into thirteen, were looked upon not only as authoritative, but as one of the most sacred possessions of Judaism.

Here are the seven rules. The first was "light and heavy," which is interpreted to mean the argument *a fortiori*. An instance given is that Josa ben Jochanan of Jerusalem argued that whatever was true of his wife was even more true of all women. The second was "a like decision," the argument from analogy. The third was "a conclusion from a single text." The fourth, "a conclusion from two texts." The fifth, "from the particular to the general and the general to the particular." The sixth, "to the like in another place"—that is, applying a similar method to a different passage. The last, "the argument from the context." It is only necessary to remark that a judicious employment of these principles would make it possible to arrive at any result desired.²

¹ On Jewish exegesis and its purpose see Schürer, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-399.

² On the seven rules of Hillel see Schürer, *Geschichte*⁴, ii., 397. They are found in the Tosephta Sanhedrin, vii., *fin.* (ed. Zuckerman, p. 427), the Aboth de Rabbi Nathan, c. 37, and in the

A particular instance of Hillel's legislative ingenuity was an ordinance which bore the enigmatic name of *Prosbol*. This showed how he was able to harmonize the ordinances of the law with the realities of life. It is well known that according to the Mosaic code all debts contracted were remitted during the Sabbatical year. The natural result of such a law was a great reluctance to lend, a result which had indeed been foreseen: "Beware," it was said, "that there be not a base thought in thine heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou give him nought." In order to remedy this Hillel ruled that if a creditor made a declaration before the judge that he reserved to himself the right to collect his debts whenever he chose, the Sabbath year did not remit them. In other words, he introduced a system of "contracting out."¹

His industry, his learning, and his character—gentle and mild, but determined—gave Hillel an ascendancy in his own day which survived long after his death, and if we are to believe later tradition a continuous succession of his descendants acquired almost a monopoly of the position of head of the Rabbinic schools. His son, Simeon I., was distinguished for his modesty and his godliness, and the only saying of his recorded is certainly characteristic: "All my days I have grown up among the Wise, and I have not found anything better than silence; and not study, but action is the chief thing; and whoso makes many words occasions sin." His son, Gamaliel I., was the teacher of St. Paul, the wise counsellor of the Acts. Then in succession came Simeon II., Gamaliel II., Simeon III., Judah the Prince, who compiled the Mishna, and Gamaliel III. But there are some

introduction to the Siphra (Ugolini, *Thesaurus*, t. xiv., 595). See on them the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, xii., pp. 30-33. They were expanded into thirteen rules ascribed to the Rabbi Ishmael. These are contained in the Jewish prayer-books, and supposed to be recited by each Jew every day.

¹ On the *Prosbol* see Schebiith, x., 3-7 (the treatise of the Mishna on the Sabbatical year); Schürer, *op. cit.*, pp. 427-8; *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, x., 219. The word is most probably derived from the Greek *προσβολή*, and perhaps represents the Latin *adjectio*—a clause added to and modifying a contract.

who think that the succession in office has created the story of genealogical descent from Hillel, and that even the succession in office itself is not historical.

The controversy between Hillel and Shammai was continued by their schools,¹ and the Mishna bears witness to the many differences of opinion between the house of Hillel and the house of Shammai—so they were designated. So constant was the dispute between them, so many were the different conclusions, that it was said the one law had become two laws. The same features were preserved in the schools as had been shown by their founders, and the followers of Hillel were supposed to be distinguished for the leniency of their interpretations, those of Shammai for their severity. In 316 places in the Mishna are the differences of these two schools cited, and in only fifty-three of them is the milder decision that of the school of Shammai. During the years that preceded the fall of Jerusalem, a fundamental dispute between them was concerned with the relation to the Roman power. While the followers of Hillel strove to assuage the increasing bitterness, those of Shammai encouraged it. In order to increase the bitterness, they laid down that no Jew should engage in buying or selling with Gentiles. A violent discussion is said to have taken place at which many followers of Hillel were murdered—it is difficult to say whether we are dealing with sober history or Rabbinical Midrash—and as a result the eighteen articles which intensified the evil were adopted. At any rate this is certain: The policy of harshness and violence triumphed; all moderate counsels were suppressed; and this unrestrained bitterness resulted in the revolt and the destruction of the Jewish state. For a time the policy of Shammai prevailed, and its results were evil. When the schools of law were restored, first at Jamnia, then at Tiberias, it was the precepts of Hillel that became dominant. It was, as we have seen, his descendants or reputed descendants who, after the destruction of Jerusalem, became heads of the Rabbinical schools, and therefore presidents of the Sanhedrin in its new

¹ On the schools of Hillel and Shammai see Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, p. 11, and the articles "Bait Hillel" and "Bait Shammai" in the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. iii., p. 115.

aspect, and it was his descendant, Rabbi Judah, the Prince, to whom his nation was indebted for the compilation of the Mishna.

A perusal of the pages of the Talmud will reveal to us the subjects of debate between the two schools. The following, taken from the tract of the Mishna called *Berakhoth*, or "Blessings," may serve as an instance:

"These are the controversies relating to meals between the schools of Shammai and Hillel. The school of Shammai says, 'One must say the blessing of the day, and then bless the wine'; but the school of Hillel says, 'One must say the blessing on the wine, and then bless the day.'

"The school of Shammai say, 'Men must pour water on the hands, and then mix the goblet'; but the school of Hillel say, 'The goblet must be mixed, and then water poured on the hands.'

"The school of Shammai say, 'One is to wipe his hands on the napkin and lay it on the table'; but the school of Hillel say, 'on the cushion.'

"The school of Shammai bless 'the light, the food, the spices, and the distinction of the day'; but the school of Hillel bless 'the light, the spices, the food, and the distinction of the day.' The school of Shammai say, 'Who created the light of fire'; but the school of Hillel say, 'Creator of the light of fire.'

"If one have eaten and forgotten and not blessed? The school of Shammai say, 'He must return to his place and bless.' But the school of Hillel say, 'He may bless in the place where he recollects.' How long is one obliged to bless? 'Until the food in his stomach be digested.'"¹

One of the instances given in which the school of Hillel was more rigid than that of Shammai was deemed of sufficient importance to give a name to a whole tract of the Mishna, that of *Beza*, or "The Egg." Hillel held that an egg laid on a feast day might not be eaten; Shammai was of a contrary opinion.²

We may give one more instance of the controversy between these schools, taking it from the Haggada and not the Halakha:

¹ *Berakhoth* (the treatise on Blessings), viii.

² *Beza*, i., 1; *Eduoth*, iv., 1.

"The school of Shammai said: 'The heavens were created first, and the earth afterwards, as it is said, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."' The school of Hillel said: 'The earth was created first, and the heavens afterwards, as it is said, "Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands."'"

The two schools continued to quote texts against one another, each of them relying on the order in which the heavens and earth were mentioned in the texts cited; at last the account ends:

"Contention arose between them on this question; until the Holy Spirit rested between them, and they both agreed that both (heaven and earth) were created in one hour and at one moment. What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do? He put forth His right hand, and stretched forth the heavens, and He put forth His left hand and founded the earth, as it is said: 'Yea, Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spread out the heavens.'"¹

It is difficult for us to form a just estimate of these schools and their teaching. It is presented to us in so unattractive a form, it is so alien to all our thoughts, it is so inconsistent with any sound methods of exegesis and interpretation, that we can hardly have patience with it. Yet from time to time some learned Rabbi attempts to apologize for his religion, and a bold claim has been advanced that all Christianity is to be found in the Talmud.² It is, indeed,

¹ *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, ed. Friedlander, pp. 134, 135.

² By far the most moderate and thoughtful defence of Rabbinism is that of Abrahams in the work already cited. We may quote with much approval the words with which he ends his preface: "I am well aware of the many imperfections of the studies here presented. But I do claim that I have not written apologetically. Still less have I been moved by controversial aims. Only on rare occasions have I directly challenged the picture of Pharisaism drawn in Germany by Professor Schürer, and in England by Canon Charles. I have preferred to supplement their views by a positive presentation of another view. In this sense only are these studies apologetic and controversial. . . . I have never consciously suppressed defects in the Pharisaic position, nor have I asserted in behalf of it more than the facts, as known to me, have demanded." We may recog-

true that grains of gold may be extracted from the mass of teaching; that occasionally we find a shrewd remark, an elevated thought, or a parable picturesque in its language and spiritual in its teaching. We remember, indeed, that we are concerned with a religious development which has its roots in the Old Testament, and that it could never completely lose what it drew from such an origin. We may make every allowance for the care for religion, the earnestness, the industry of the Rabbinic schools, and the piety of some of their members. Yet the fact remains that we may turn over page after page of the Talmud and that each passage seems more trivial and even repulsive than its predecessor, that the matters in dispute were puerile, and all the weighty matters of morality and the Jewish law were left far behind. If we turn to the Midrashic commentary, we find legend and folklore, stories trivial and often unedifying, and an exegesis which is pedantic and fantastic. Whether we judge them intellectually or spiritually, the Rabbinic interpretations are unsatisfying and erroneous; they are marked by incoherent reasonings, verbal quibbles, and bad logic. An interested history may attempt, on the basis of one or two recorded sayings of Hillel, to put him forward as a forerunner or rival of our Lord, and some slight resemblance has been found in one or two words or maxims, but all such attempts are really absurd. If we consider the proportion the more rational sayings bear to the rest of his teaching, if we consider how little bearing they have on the system which he built up, how little bearing they have on the thoughts of his followers, it is seen how unsubstantial are all these claims.

Judaism has, indeed, never been spiritually dead. It has preserved something always of the sap of the trunk from which it has sprung. However distorted in mind, in morals, in religion might be the Rabbis, they yet have always had

nize the fairness, the piety, and the humanism of Dr. Abrahams, but at the same time our judgment must be that his presentation is unhistorical and the judgment of Schürer and Charles is right. The modern Jew has learnt much from Christianity, and seeks to find his new faith in his old books, and he finds what he seeks, but forgets the dross that he rejects.

in their way a zeal for God, although little according to knowledge. We have great earnestness and strong characters. We find sometimes a strange element of mysticism. But all is vitiated by self-will, by narrowness and pedantry. Their eyes are darkened, their ears are dull of hearing. They have shut off from themselves the highest gift of the Spirit, which is wisdom. We shall see again and again, as our history proceeds, how our Lord sweeps away the cobwebs of pedantry with which religion had been obscured, and illuminates it by a single flash of insight and inspiration.

VI

It is one of the most difficult of problems to estimate the real religious life of a country, even of a country we know well and in our own days. How much harder of one remote from our own times, concerning which but scanty records have been preserved. Often it is the singular, the exceptional, and even the debased that becomes most conspicuous. The real piety of a nation does not court publicity, and lies concealed and unnoticed. We have depicted, so far as we have been able, the most conspicuous currents of the thought of Israel in Palestine at this time, the Sadducean priesthood, the Galilaean zealots, the learned students of the law. The picture is an unattractive one. In its most conspicuous developments Israel seems to have lacked the essential quality of piety. Religion seems to have failed as a guide to life. Do these, we may ask, give us a complete or true picture of the life of the nation? It may be doubted. What is best hardly appears in this way. These uncouth, distorted developments represent the perversion of the true religion which they help to conceal. They testify to a reality behind them, without which they could not have been possible. All this exaggeration and distortion could only arise among a people that really cared for religion, and if there was real piety to be found. It must be remembered that the roots of national piety, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, were everywhere known. The law and the prophets were read in every synagogue, the religious worship of the temple still preserved the ideals and memories of the

past, the psalms were the organ of public worship and the expression of personal piety. There were many who strove to fashion their lives on the pure morality of the Old Testament, undisturbed by the pedantic philosophy, the party strife, and the religious fantasies which prevailed so widely.

It is this aspect of Jewish life which is presented to us with singular beauty by the Evangelist¹ St. Luke in his story of the births of John and Jesus. It must be frankly confessed that there is much reasonable doubt as to the limits of what is history and what is legend in the story, and the criticism, whether positive or negative, which would speak dogmatically goes far beyond the evidence available, but there is no reason to doubt that we have put before us true types of religious life as it existed at that day in Palestine. It may be noticed that throughout there are no special Christian traits, and both the theology and the religious life are purely Jewish in character.

The official priesthood might be corrupt, but Zacharias and Elisabeth were righteous and devout. Mary, the maiden of Nazareth, was one who had found favour with God. Joseph, her husband, was a just and upright man. Living in Jerusalem, worshipping in the temple, untouched by the evil around them, lived men like Symeon, pious and religious, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and in the temple and its courts might be found those like Hannah the prophetess, who served God night and day, was constant in prayer and fasting, and is represented as having the insight to recognize the Messiah when He came. How many were there, quiet and devout, looking for the redemption of Jerusalem?

The aspirations of these people are put before us in Psalms, drawn from the language and thoughts of the Old Testament. In nothing do they go beyond the limits of

¹ I do not feel competent, for we have not the evidence, to pronounce on the origin and source of the stories, and especially the psalms in the narrative of the Birth as given by St. Luke. Our knowledge of the methods of ancient historians may make us suspect that these songs have been written to present to us the fervid hopes and the religious feelings of their alleged authors, and there is some improbability in the supposition of their genuineness, but we may use them with confidence as presentations of Jewish life and religion.

what might be learnt from Jewish prophecy in its more exalted form. The thoughts are based on the pious acceptance of God as the all-powerful ruler of the world, and on resigned submission to His will. No word of God is without power. God is my Saviour. Holy is His name. His mercy is for all generations of them that love Him. My soul doth magnify the Lord, my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. The proud, the princes on their thrones, the mighty upon earth, the rich are powerless against Him. To the poor, the suffering, the meek, the lowly He is full of kindness. His special love is for Israel. He is the God of Israel. He remembers the covenant which he made with Abraham and the oath which he swore unto Jacob.

All that has been foretold by the prophets will be accomplished. The Messiah, the Son of God, will sit on the throne of David His servant, and rule over Israel for ever. Of His kingdom there shall be no end. He brings redemption and salvation to His people. He will raise a horn of salvation in the house of His servant David; salvation from our enemies and from the hands of all that hate us. He will shine upon those who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death; He is the light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel. The end of salvation is that they may be able to serve God in holiness and righteousness. He will guide their feet into the way of peace.

We may perhaps seek further evidence of the religious life of Israel at this time in the eighteen *Blessings* which form part of the synagogue prayers.¹ They were composed in their present form towards the end of the first century, and some of the petitions were added after the fall of Jerusalem, but the great body of the prayers seems to have been written at an earlier date, and may reflect the religious aspirations of the period we are treating, and, at any rate, will show us what the religion was which the Jew would learn in his services. God is blessed as the God of Israel, the God of our Fathers. From Him come help and salvation. He is

¹ On these see Schürer, *op. cit.*, pp. 538 ff., who gives a German translation; Hirsch, article "Shemoneh 'Esreh" in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, xi., pp. 270-282; Oesterley and Box, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-335; Singer, *Service of the Synagogue*, pp. 44-54.

Almighty, Eternal, Mighty to help. He giveth grace to the living, life to the dead, support to the fallen. "Lead us back to Thy law, and bring us to Thy service." God is asked to forgive the sins of His people and show them mercy, to give blessings to the land and all the fruits of the earth, to give freedom to the land and assemble the dispersed from the four ends of the world. His justice and righteousness are praised, and His hatred of evil. "Judge us in righteousness. Destroy our enemies. Build up the throne of David in our midst. Let everything that liveth praise Thee." The outlook throughout is purely Jewish, and there is not any Messianic expectation in the more restricted sense, although the salvation of Israel is hoped for; but the blessings breathe a deep and strong religious sense, a firm belief in God, a submission to His overruling providence, a consciousness of holiness and righteousness and justice such as the pedantic and unreal study of the law often obscured, but never destroyed.

When Jesus the Messiah came to Israel, there was much evil in the land, and history always records the evil; there was much perversion of what was good, and it is what is perverted and strange that attracts attention, but it must never be forgotten that the religion of Judaism was based at all times in its history on the Old Testament with its message of righteousness and holiness, and on the traditional piety of the Jewish people. The unattractive developments were the perversion or exaggeration of what was good. The law was holy and spiritual. Israel was a people more devoted to religion than any nation has ever been. That religion was a high and lofty one. There was a strong, rigid, system of education, of worship, of life established in the land. There were indeed perversion and exaggeration. A dominant heathenism and the influence of Hellenic life caused continual strife and often violence. The ideal of Israel had failed. But the nation still preserved the seed of true religion, and there were many ready to respond to the divine message when it came among them.

CHAPTER II

THE EDUCATION OF JESUS

THE name by which Jesus was ordinarily called was Jesus of Nazareth.¹ In Nazareth He lived some thirty years previous to the baptism of John and the beginning of His ministry. He seems to have been known as the Son of Mary,² and it is a reasonable conjecture that Joseph, who is last mentioned when He was twelve years old, was dead.³

¹ In St. Mark (i. 24; x. 47; xiv. 67; xvi. 6) and twice in St. Luke (iv. 34; xxiv. 19), according to Westcott and Hort's text, *Ναζαρηνός*; in St. Matthew (ii. 23; xxvi. 71), once in St. Luke (xviii. 37), in St. John (xviii. 5, 7; xix. 19), and Acts (ii. 22; iii. 6; iv. 10; vi. 14; xxii. 8) *Ναζωραῖος*.

² Mc. vi. 3: *οὐχ οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ τέκτων, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς Μαρίας*; This is the form of the passage in St. Mark. In St. Matthew (xiii. 55) it is changed to *ὁ τοῦ τέκτονος υἱός*; *οὐχ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ λέγεται Μαριάμ*; In St. Luke (iv. 23) to *οὐχὶ υἱὸς ἐστὶν Ἰωσήφ οὗτος*;

There is no doubt about the reading in St. Mark, although attempts are made to suggest, on the authority of late uncials and certain later MSS. with the Armenian and Aethiopian versions, that it should be *τέκτονος υἱὸς καὶ Μαρίας*, which would be awkward Greek. So Loisy, *Évangiles Synoptiques*, i., p. 833 n.

The designation of Jesus as Son of Mary is a most unusual expression. Only twice in the Old Testament is anyone designated by the mother's name, and hardly ever, if at all, in Rabbinical Hebrew, and it would naturally be corrected. Renan ascribes it to the fact that Mary was a widow and Jesus was probably her only son. Or it may be intended as a term of contempt, and have alluded to suspicions and calumnies such as we find later among the Jews as to His birth.

³ While the mother and brethren of Jesus are several times mentioned in the Gospel narratives, Joseph is never referred to after the commencement of our Lord's ministry; in fact, his name does not occur in St. Mark's Gospel at all. The only passage which might be quoted as implying that he was still living is Jn. vi. 42: *Οὐχὶ οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ, οὗ ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα*;

Like Joseph, He followed the trade of a carpenter.¹ He was therefore brought up, as we may conjecture, in the modest and respectable position of an artisan. It must be noted, however, that the brother of Joseph, if we are to trust what seems to be a sound early tradition, bore the name of Clopas,² which is Greek—the shorter form, in fact, of Cleopatros—and the adoption of a Greek name implies some worldly position. It is probable also that Salome, the wife of Zebedee, who was a fisherman of means at Capernaum, and employed hired servants, was His mother's sister,³ and if this conjecture be correct it may

¹ Mc. vi. 3 (as quoted above). Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 88: καὶ ἐλθόντος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην καὶ νομιζομένου Ἰωσήφ τοῦ τέκτονος υἱοῦ ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἀειδοῦς ὡς αἱ γραφαὶ ἐκήρυσσον φαινομένου καὶ τέκτονος νομιζομένου, ταῦτα γὰρ τὰ τεκτονικὰ ἔργα εἰργάζετο ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὢν, ἄροτρα καὶ ζυγά, διὰ τούτων καὶ τὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης σύμβολα διδάσκων καὶ ἐνεργῇ βίον. Celsus ap. Origen, *Cont. Celsum*, vi., 36: εἰτα παίζων τὰ περὶ τοῦ ξύλου ἀπὸ δύο τόπων αὐτὸ χλευάζει λέγων διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸ παραλαμβάνεσθαι, ἥτοι ἐπεὶ σταυρῷ ἐνηλώθη ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν ἢ ἐπεὶ τέκτων ἦν τὴν τέχνην. Origen, however, says in reply: οὐδαμοῦ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις φερομένων εὐαγγελίων τέκτων αὐτὸς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀναγράφεται. This may imply that Origen had a different reading in St. Mark.

² Clopas is definitely stated by Hegesippus (ap. Eus. iii., 11; iv., 22; see Zahn, *Forschungen*, vi., 235) to be brother of Joseph and his son Symeon to be cousin of our Lord, and there is no reason to doubt the statement. He is presumably the Clopas mentioned in Jn. xix. 25 (Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Κλωπᾶ). This may mean Mary, the wife of Clopas, or the daughter of Clopas. The parallelism of the clauses makes it impossible to identify her with the Virgin's sister, but it is quite possible she may be the mother of James the Little and of Joses mentioned in Mk. xv. 40, 47; xvi. 1. In this case we should have three cousins of Jesus, James the Little, Joses, and Symeon; and the sobriquet "the Little" may have been employed to distinguish him from his cousin James, the Lord's brother. The only difficulty in this identification is that in three cases we have cousins bearing the same name.

It may be noted that the identification of Alpheus with Clopas has nothing to be said for it, and that neither the brothers nor the cousins of our Lord were among the Apostles.

³ The identification of Salome with the mother of Zebedee's children is probable. The lists of those present at the Cross in Mark (xv. 40) and Matthew (xxvii. 56) appear to be identical, and in one is mentioned Salome and in the other the mother of Zebedee's children. The further identification with "the sister of the Mother of Jesus" in Jn. xix. 25 is probable, as thus the

be the reason why Capernaum became later the home of His family and the centre of His preaching.

Four sons of Joseph are mentioned, James and Joses, Judas and Simon. He had also daughters, who, it appears, married and settled in Nazareth.¹ These are always referred to as the brothers and sisters of Jesus, and some of His brothers played a not unimportant part in the early history of Christianity.² Of their life and profession we know nothing, but the grandsons of Judas a hundred years later are found occupying the position of small farmers.³

Externally Jesus lived, as a boy and young man, the ordinary life of an artisan in simple surroundings, but not in poverty, and it may be noted that He always seems to speak of the poor from outside. Our story must begin

names in John would refer to the same persons as those in Matthew and Mark, with the addition of Mary, the mother of Jesus. That James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were cousins of Jesus does not, in the face of their position, seem improbable, and it is consistent with the whole practice of the fourth Gospel that neither Zebedee nor Salome nor either of the sons of Zebedee should be mentioned by name.

¹ This is a reasonable conjecture from the words (Mc. vi. 3) καὶ οὐκ εἶσιν αἱ ἀδελφαὶ αὐτοῦ ὧδε πρὸς ἡμᾶς. They were married and settled in Nazareth, while the rest of the family had moved to Capernaum. Matthew (xiii. 56) adds πᾶσαι, which would imply more than two.

² On the many complicated questions which have been raised about the brothers of Jesus see Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, VI., ii., "Bruder und Vettern Jesu"; Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, Dissertation II., "The Brethren of the Lord." There seems to be no reason (except a dogmatic one) for adopting the conjecture of Jerome that they were cousins, and no evidence in favour of the Epiphanian theory that they were half-brothers against the Helvidian that they were the sons of Mary. The reasons against the latter view are not derived from history.

³ Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 20) tells us on the authority of Hegesippus that certain grandsons of Judas, called the brother of the Lord according to the flesh, were accused before Domitian as being of the race of David, and therefore presumably dangerous rebels. They pleaded their poverty. The property of the two amounted only to 9,000 denarii, and this not in money but in land, their estate amounting to thirty-nine acres, which they cultivated themselves (see Zahn, *Forschungen*, vi., 239).

with some account of His home and His home life. It will be necessary as the preliminary to our history to investigate the environment in which He grew up; to consider the natural features, the political and social conditions, the religious beliefs and the mental atmosphere of Nazareth and Galilee; to describe the education He would have received and the intellectual equipment with which, as a boy brought up in a country town, He would have been furnished. Historical records supply us with considerable and accurate information, while the study of the recorded words of Jesus will throw abundant light on the external conditions which determined the form of His teaching, and will contribute much to the understanding of it.

I

Nazareth was a city of Southern Galilee, situated to the north of the plain of Esdraelon.¹ It lay in a basin in the southernmost range of the Galilaeen mountains, some thousand feet above the sea, surrounded on all sides by low hills.

The province of Galilee had well-marked natural features. It was rich, fertile, and well watered, famous for its crops, its vines, and its olives. Copious streams burst out from the hills, and there are places where the grass is green even in summer. It presents a marked contrast to the hot, sterile ridges of Judaea. The one was green and smiling, the other hard and stern and brown; the one a country of gardens and fields and vineyards, the other the feeding-place of scattered flocks or the haunt of the wild animal.

Different, too, from Judaea were the relations of Galilee to other lands. No one would climb the steep valleys of Jerusalem save for the sake of visiting it. No highways passed through Judaea. Safe in its rocky isolation it had often defied the armies of far larger states, and when it had yielded to the might of Rome, it could still remain the

¹ On Galilee and Nazareth see especially *Galilee in the Time of Christ*, by the Rev. Selah Merrill, D.D. This seems to be the source of most of the modern information on the subject. G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, chap. xx., brings out the salient features admirably. Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, chap. ii., gives an attractive picture.

asylum of a stern creed, difficult of access to new ideas. But Galilee was traversed by great roads.¹ The traveller from Egypt, after following the coast-line nearly as far as Mount Carmel, turned inland to the plain of Esdraelon, and, passing either north or south of the Sea of Tiberias, went on his way to Damascus and Antioch, and the lands beyond the Euphrates. The roads from Ptolemais and the Phoenician coast to the Greek cities of the Decapolis, to Damascus and to the east, passed through it. Nazareth itself lay somewhat secluded, shut off from the world beyond the hills that surrounded it, but travellers have described to us how different a scene would be presented to anyone who climbed to the summit of the ridge. To the south he would see the pilgrim road which led to Jerusalem emerging from the mountains of Samaria, and the great highway from Egypt would lie before him in its whole length from Megiddo as far as Beth-shan. To the north he would look down on the road from Ptolemais to the Sea of Galilee, at that time an even more important route. Nor need there be any doubt that along these two roads, the great arteries of the country and of all the regions beyond Jordan, there would be a continuous and varied traffic. However secluded the village of Nazareth might be, it was very close to the greater life of the Gentile world.

So Galilee was in close proximity to another world. While the territory of Judaea was still largely a sanctuary of Judaism, protected by various privileges and little contaminated by any close touch with heathen life, Galilee, although an essentially Jewish territory, was in close contact with Greek cities on all sides. Samaria, the cities of the Decapolis and of the Phoenician coast were distant but a few miles, and the view from the hill-tops round Nazareth would reflect something of the varied life of the Roman Empire.

¹ See especially G. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 425: "The next great features of Galilee are her roads. The Garden of the Lord is crossed by many of the world's most famous highways. We saw that Judaea was on the road to nowhere; Galilee is covered with roads to everywhere—roads from the harbours of the Phoenician coast to Samaria, Gilead, Hauran, and Damascus; roads from Sharon to the valley of the Jordan; roads from the sea to the desert; roads from Egypt to Assyria."

Nazareth at the present day has a population of about 10,000.¹ It is an ordinary Oriental town, with small, flat-roofed houses, crowded together along narrow, winding streets running up the hill-side. A single fountain provides it with water, and it is surrounded by gardens, by olive-yards and vineyards. No doubt in some of its characteristics it is little changed from what it was in the first century of the Christian era, but there is one fundamental fact which must not be forgotten. For centuries Nazareth, like the whole of Palestine, has suffered under the rule of the Turk, and an aspect of squalor has impressed itself on the country. Then it was inhabited by a people with an inherited discipline of life, and although there is no reason to think that the houses were more luxurious than those we see now, or the homes less simple, yet undoubtedly there was a tradition of orderly local government, there were cleanly and decent sanitary customs which have been lost under the neglect of Mohammedan and Turkish rule. Nazareth is described as a city.² That means that it was larger in size than at present and was an organized community. If we may trust Josephus, it may have had some fifteen or twenty thousand inhabitants. Often, as we travel through the Turkish Empire, we notice how where once stood a city now there is but a village; and the broken columns, the half-ruined tombs, and the fragments of inscriptions are all the signs of former importance that remain. Some such change has no doubt been experienced by Nazareth. It would be governed by a Council of Elders, and law and custom demanded that they should care for the roads and streets as well as for the synagogue. The market would be carefully regulated. The laws of property were strict.

¹ The present population of Nazareth is given differently in different authorities. I take 10,000 from the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

² Lc. i. 26: εἰς πόλιν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἡ ὄνομα Ναζαρέτ, Mt. ii. 13. It must be remembered that the name city does not imply size so much as an organized community with its own territory surrounding it and some form of self-government. Josephus (*Life*, xlv., § 235) says that Galilee contained 204 cities and villages, the smallest of which numbered above 15,000 inhabitants. On this statement see Merrill, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

The morals of the inhabitants would be duly supervised. There was much wealth and hospitality. The life of that day in Palestine was no doubt simple, but it was well ordered and dignified. We must not read back into the past the decadence of the Turkish Empire.

Even now it is a pleasant place. Its air is fresh and healthy, even cold in winter; it is surrounded by gardens and vineyards. It is in the centre of a fertile and well-wooded district.

"The road which goes up from the Bay of Carmel to Nazareth," says Sir George Adam Smith, "winds as among English glades, with open woods of oak and an abundance of flowers and grass. Often, indeed, as about Nazareth, the limestone breaks out not less bare and dusty than in Judaea itself, but over the most of Lower Galilee there is a profusion of bush, with scattered forest trees—holly-oak, maple, sycamore, bay tree, myrtle, arbutus, sumac, and others—and in the valleys olive orchards and stretches of fat corn-land."¹

In the time of our Lord, instead of the desolation of misgovernment, there would be all the signs of a prosperous life and a richly cultivated land.²

A careful study of the language of the Gospels will both illustrate and be illustrated by the picture of Galilaean life as we can reconstruct it.³ The words of our Lord reveal

¹ G. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

² Renan (*Vie de Jésus*, p. 28) gives a somewhat idyllic description: "Même aujourd'hui, Nazareth est un délicieux séjour, le seul endroit peut-être de la Palestine où l'âme se sente un peu soulagée du fardeau qui l'opprime au milieu de cette désolation sans égale. La population est aimable et souriante: les jardins sont frais et verts. Antonin Martyr, à la fin du VI^e siècle, fait un tableau enchanteur de la fertilité des environs, qu'il compare au paradis. Quelques vallées du côté de l'ouest justifient pleinement sa description. La fontaine où se concentraient autrefois la vie et la gaieté de la petite ville est détruite: ses canaux crevassés ne donnent plus qu'une eau troublée. Mais la beauté des femmes qui s'y rassemblent le soir, cette beauté qui était déjà remarquée au VI^e siècle et où l'on voyait un don de la vierge Marie, s'est conservée d'une manière frappante. C'est le type syrien dans toute sa grâce pleine de langueur. Nul doute que Marie n'ait été là presque tous les jours, et n'ait pris rang, l'urne sur l'épaule, dans la file de ses compatriotes restées obscures."

³ By far the best analysis of the circumstances implied by our Lord's words is contained in a paper published in *Bibliotheca Sacra*,

an experience which harmonizes with what we may learn from other sources, and at the same time enriches our knowledge. The imagery and similitudes that He employs, His parables and proverbial sayings, correspond with the environment that history gives. He speaks as one who has observed life closely under all the aspects which the country presents. Nazareth was a country town, entirely occupied with country interests and pursuits. While there are reminiscences of the market-place, the synagogue, the streets and lanes of the city, our attention is mainly directed to the farm and to agriculture, to the large estate, to the vineyard and the cornland, to the shepherd with his sheep, to animals wild and tame, to trees and fruits and flowers. From all these sources our Lord draws constant illustrations. Nor need it be altogether fanciful to see in the many allusions to travelling the influence of the situation of Nazareth near the great commercial routes, and of the commercial enterprise of the Jewish people. To these must be added the details of domestic life, while the wedding feast, that conspicuous festival of the well-to-do countryside, is a favourite subject of parable.

Some illustrations in detail will fill in the picture. The large household and the well-managed estate were features in the economic life of Galilee. We read of the faithful and wise servant whom the lord hath set over his household, and, in contrast, of the dishonest steward who wastes his master's goods. We read of the rich man whose ground brings forth plenteously, who will pull down his barns and build greater, who says to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." There is the enterprising landlord who plants a vineyard, and sets a hedge about it, and digs a winepress, and builds a tower, and lets it out to husbandmen. We notice how often there are allusions to the wealth, the worldliness, and the good living of the people. Many have large numbers of slaves or of hired servants. It is

vol. xxix., July, 1872, pp. 510-531, by the Rev. Selah Merrill, Salmon Falls, N.H., on "Christ as a Practical Observer of Nature, Persons, and Events." The same method is followed in a popular way in T. R. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, chap. ii., "Childhood and Youth."

the custom of most men to strive to lay up earthly treasure. The householder brings out of his treasure things new and old. One man has bought a farm, another five yoke of oxen. The picture that is presented to us is that of a wealthy and prosperous agricultural community.

Some of the estates are held by those who travel abroad and leave them in the hands of stewards. There are traders and rich merchants. There is the young man who is led by a spirit of adventure to leave the family and squander his inheritance in riotous living, and the wise elder brother who lives a steady life at home.

All the life of agriculture was full of interest to our Lord as to the community in which He lived. He draws His illustrations from the vineyard, the cornfield, and the sheep farm; from the ploughman, the sower, and the gathering of the harvest; from the continual succession of natural phenomena; from the corn of wheat which falls into the ground and dies. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest." "Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." Above all, the life of the shepherd with his sheep has impressed itself on the language of the Gospels. "They were scattered as sheep not having a shepherd." "Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves." "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" "I am the good shepherd." When our Lord is speaking of the souls that are saved and tells us that they shall go in and out and find pasture, we feel that He uses this imagery to express His thoughts because He had lived much of His life in the country where there were many flocks of sheep. Such language has become largely conventional for us now; it was not so for Him.

He was interested, too, in the wild life of the country as well as in domestic animals. "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." We read of wolves, of scorpions

and serpents, of eagles and ravens, of the she-ass with her young colt running beside her, such as may be seen any day in Palestine now, of the dog, the Eastern scavenger, and the swine, of the hen that gathers her chickens under her wings, of the camel, the ox, the calf, the kid and the goat. Galilee in the spring-time is a land of flowers, and what traveller in Palestine would not echo the words: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The wonderful economy of nature which we study now with such scientific zeal is put before us quite simply: "Behold the birds of heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" is the proverb a gardener would use, speaking to those who were gardeners. We read, too, of the grass of the field, of the thorns and tares, of the bramble bush, the vine, the fig, and the sycamore.¹ The allusions to nature are natural and spontaneous; they hardly ever appear to be literary. They are the language of a countryman, speaking to countrymen. Our Lord speaks of the great mustard plant which bears seed so attractive to small birds that they lodge in its branches,² of the reed in the marshes of the great plain shaken by the wind, of the watercourse swollen by the winter spate, and the waterless places like the limestone ridges above Nazareth.

¹ It is a curious fact that there is no mention at all of the olive tree in the words of our Lord, and yet Galilee was famous for its olives. "It is easier," they said, "to raise a legion of olive-trees in Galilee than to raise one child in Judaea" (Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*, p. 180; see Merrill, *op. cit.*, p. 35). The only reference to the production of oil is in the parable of the unjust steward (Lc. xvi. 6).

² The reference to the mustard seed is not quite free from difficulty. We are assured, however, that it attains in one year a growth of 10 or 12 feet in good soil, and that birds are fond of its seed, and so rest on its stalks. But it is curious to notice that this is the only instance in such descriptions of nature where we seem to have a literary allusion. The reference to birds lodging in its branches appears to be a reminiscence of Dan. iv. 12: "And the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the branches thereof."

Another interesting side of the picture is the domestic life that is presented. We read of the women grinding at the mill, the leaven that is hid in three measures of meal, the salt that has lost its savour, the lamp placed on a stand to light the house, the woman who lights her lamp in the small, dark house to find the lost piece of silver, the old garments which have to be mended and the worn-out wine-skins, the oven heated with dried grass, the children's bread, the servants and the master of the house. The allusions all sound simple and natural and true. And then beyond the household comes the life of the town, the well of water springing up into eternal life, such as the spring of Nazareth, the children playing in the street, the men standing idle in the market-place, the disputes about an inheritance, the field with hidden treasure—a characteristic Eastern touch then, as now—the local court with its judges, the prison, and the synagogue.

The great festival of Eastern life is the wedding, and the wedding with all its accompaniments provides many a suitable illustration in our Lord's words: "Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn so long as the bridegroom is with them?" We read of the virgins who trim their lamps and go forth to meet the bride when the marriage procession brings her home at night; of the servants who wait for their lord coming back from the marriage-feast; of the brilliantly lighted hall where the marriage-feast, is held in contrast to the darkness outside; of the marriage garment. Hospitality has always been a recognized Eastern virtue. The father kills the fatted calf for the returned prodigal. Those who are bidden to a feast should take the lower place, and the lesson is given that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Most people asked their rich neighbours when they gave a feast, but Jesus bids us ask "the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind."

It is possible to carry exegesis of this type to a fanciful and unreal extent. It is easy to lay too much stress on single allusions, or to make deductions from what is obviously commonplace. There is, however, a wealth of illustration to be drawn from the Gospels which guards us, I think, sufficiently against such a danger. A portion of the imagery

of the Gospels is due, no doubt, to the Sea of Galilee and the life of the towns which surrounded it. Some small part reflects scenes at Jerusalem. But it is early impressions that, above all, form the mind, and we cannot doubt that continually in the Synoptic Gospels and less often in St. John¹ we have the reflection and influence of the life of our Lord at Nazareth.

Three things may be learnt from this analysis of our Lord's words. It teaches us first something of the Galilaean country life. The picture is that of a well-to-do rural community. There are no great signs of poverty. There is much comfortable wealth. There is much vigour and enterprise in trade. There is good agriculture. There are rich flocks and herds. The life is a prosperous and happy one. Nature is fertile and its aspect is pleasing. The picture is one which harmonizes with what we may learn from other sources, and forbids us to think of Nazareth as a poor and mean city.

Then, next, it helps to assure us that the words of Jesus correspond, to and are the natural outcome of, the circumstances in which He lived. They are not such as could have come from a dweller in Jerusalem; they are very unlike anything which an educated Jew of that city would have spoken; they are not for the most part such as would come from the circumstances of the infant Church. This, of course, cannot be applied to all the words of Jesus; it does not take away from the possibility that the diction and style of our Lord might be imitated by the Christian Church. But if a tradition was created there must have been someone to create that tradition, and it will remain true that the words of our Lord are just such as might be spoken in the circumstances which the Gospel narrative itself describes—that they are, in fact, the natural words of Jesus of Nazareth.

¹ It must be noticed that while it is true that there are considerable sections of St. John's Gospel which in style and method differ so markedly from the Synoptic language that it is difficult to believe that in their present form they could represent what our Lord taught, yet throughout the Gospel there are also passages which seem to show the same character of observation and to imply the same environment as they do, and most probably represent a sound tradition.

And, lastly, it tells us much of our Lord's human characteristics. It suggests a power of keen observation of human life and of the world of Nature, of deep sympathy with Nature as with man, a power to see behind the veil of material things. It implies the experience of one who has grown up and lived in a household of modest means, in a rich and fertile country district, who loves natural things, whose outlook on the greater world is from outside. He had lived among the townspeople and the landlords and the shepherds; He had seen the merchants and the rich traveller, the soldiers and the courtiers as they passed along the roads on either side of His home. The Gospels reflect the characteristics of Galilee.

II

We pass from the external circumstances in which Jesus grew up to the spiritual environment. It is one of the principal facts that we have to remember that He lived among an educated and religious people. Unlike most of their neighbours, to an extent and in a manner different to any other nation of the ancient world, the Jews were an educated race. If not every child, at any rate every child of respectable parents would have attended a synagogue school, would have learnt to read and very probably to write, and would possess an inbred knowledge of the Scriptures. Even more important was the fact that the whole life of the people, in the family, in the local society, and in the nation, was based upon an intense and rational religion.

The educational system of the Jews has been already described. We may presume that a boy brought up at Nazareth would attend the school attached to the synagogue, that there he would learn to read, and in particular to read the Scriptures, and would acquire some knowledge of Hebrew. He would probably also learn to write, although this was not so common an accomplishment. He would, in the family and in the school, learn all the ordinary obligations of the law, the great deeds of Jewish history, and the principles of the religion of Israel. This was an integral part of the national life and bound up with the thoughts of

the people. But the Jew of Galilee lived in the near neighbourhood of a Gentile population, and was in constant intercourse with Gentiles who passed through the land or were employed in trade or commerce or government. The contrast of the two systems of life was apparent, and the Jewish system of life and religion was possessed, not as something inherited and half understood, but with intelligence and conviction. The ordinances, the customs, and the precepts of religion were steadily observed.¹

To the influences of local life were added the inspiration and education of the constant visits to Jerusalem for the feasts. After he had attained the age of twelve or thirteen (there seems to have been some variation in the custom) a Jewish boy might accompany his parents to Jerusalem. There were, no doubt, families, whose circumstances allowed it and whose piety prompted it, who would attend the great feasts at the temple three times each year, and every city and village of Galilee would send its quota of pilgrims each time. This continued intercourse, this circulation of life and thought, must have been a constant stimulus to religion. The temple and its services, the glory of Sion, the magnificence of the city, were known to the whole people. They formed an integral part of their thoughts. Galilee would hear of all the events at Jerusalem regularly and speedily. Emissaries from the Sanhedrin went through the land; delegates from the cities would take up the temple tribute; the offerings of first-fruits were presented in the temple. Herod's influence had permeated the whole country. The news of his death created disturbances everywhere. The teaching of John the Baptist quickly collected hearers from all Palestine, and when a new prophet arose in Galilee, it would at once be a concern to the rulers of the nation in Jerusalem.²

Under such circumstances Jesus grew up. The Gospels represent Him as reading the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue.³ He entered the synagogue at Nazareth, as

¹ All this is very fully worked out in Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, book ii., chap. ix., "The Child Life in Nazareth."

² *Ibid.*, chap. x.

³ Lk. iv. 16.

His custom was, on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. A roll containing the book of the prophet Isaiah was given Him. He opened it at the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah—whether this was the allotted portion for the day or a passage that He chose Himself we cannot say—and read and expounded it. If the exposition would be in the popular Aramaic there can be no doubt that the original reading was in Hebrew. It is doubtful whether any Aramaic Targum was written at this time. Even if there were, Hebrew would be the language of the synagogue reading. The statement of St. Luke is further corroborated by the many references to the reading of the Scriptures in the words of our Lord: "Have ye not read in the Scriptures?" Although the reading is that of those that He addresses, the words suggest, if they do not require, that He, too, had read the passages referred to. The Scriptures and the reading of the Scriptures were certainly habitually in His thoughts.

It is not possible to speak with the same certainty about writing. We know that in the ancient world writing was much more a professional matter than it is at the present day, and writing is not referred to with the same frequency as reading. Yet amongst the Jews there is evidence that it must have been fairly widely diffused. The commercial needs of the nation, as the requirements of government, would demand an extended acquaintance with it. In the parable of the unjust steward all the debtors appear to be represented as keeping their own accounts: "Take thy bill quickly and write fifty." A disciple like Matthew, who had been a tax-gatherer, must have habitually made use of writing. The only special reference, however, to writing on the part of our Lord is in the story of the adulterous woman, where our Lord stoops down and writes on the ground.¹ It has also been held that the reference to the "yod" and the "horn" in the Hebrew script implies an acquaintance with the alphabet.² The argument is not conclusive, as the expression was probably proverbial, but the inference in favour of a knowledge of writing is probable. The statement made in St. John's Gospel, "How knoweth

¹ Jn. viii. 6.

² Mt. v. 18.

this man letters, having never learnt?"¹ does not imply more than that our Lord was not a professed theologian and had not been trained in a Rabbinical school. The most reasonable deduction from the evidence as a whole is that Jesus was able to read and write, and that He was acquainted with the Scriptures in Hebrew.

It is clear, on the other hand, that our Lord had never received any of that higher education which was given in the Rabbinical schools. His words show no trace of its influence, and the opportunity for receiving instruction was absent. Neither in Nazareth nor probably anywhere in Galilee did such schools exist, and the visit to the doctors in Jerusalem must be regarded as an isolated event. So far as our Lord shows any acquaintance with such teaching, it is to condemn it, but the significant point is that His language and phraseology are entirely unaffected by it.

A further question has been raised as to His acquaintance with the Greek language. It has been maintained, indeed, that He habitually spoke Greek. That opinion may be dismissed. The quotations from the actual words that He used on certain occasions are, in all cases, in the current Aramaic, and we know that that was the ordinary language of the people of Palestine outside the Greek cities. But, although Aramaic was the language of the people, the use of Greek must have been widely spread. It was the language in the East of Roman administration and of commerce. Any native of Galilee who wished to trade in the Greek cities of Syria must have possessed some knowledge of it. The use of a Greek as well as a Hebrew name was common. We have already mentioned Clopas. Stress, however, cannot be laid on Greek forms such as Peter and Didymus, as they may have been given at a later period of Apostolic history. The greater number of the names, however, mentioned in the Gospels are not Greek, and show no Greek influence. The circumstances of our Lord's life did not, except quite occasionally, bring Him into contact with Greek-speaking people, and His words do not exhibit any of the influence of Greek ideas.

Our Lord, then, had been educated in the religious habits

¹ Jn. vii. 15.

and teaching of Judaism. Like most other Jewish boys—at any rate those of respectable parents—He had learnt to read and write. He had been educated in the Scriptures, and could read them in the Hebrew tongue. His language was Aramaic, and even if He had some acquaintance with Greek, which is possible, but not probable, it exercised no influence on His words. He shows no acquaintance with the learned speculations of His own fellow-countrymen, nor with any of the secular knowledge of the times.¹

The people of Galilee were sincere Jews, and when the revolt from Rome came they were conspicuous for their loyalty and fanaticism, but the religion of Israel as exhibited there represents certain differences from that in Judaea, and we are able, by a careful study of our Lord's own words in comparison with what history has recorded of the religious situation, to define the influences under which He was brought up.

The different sects and parties of the Jews—the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots—are well known. Of these, it may be said quite definitely that there is no trace of any Essene influence in the Gospels. It would not be likely that there should be. The Essenes were confined, for the most part, to the country round the Dead Sea and to the city of Jerusalem, and we do not appear to have any evidence of their presence in Galilee, nor is there any trace to be found of any specific characteristics of Essenism in our Lord's teaching. Equally marked is the absence, except in the Jerusalem sections, of any reference to the Sadducees or their teaching. They were confined in their influence and importance to Jerusalem.²

The scribes and Pharisees, on the other hand, were a definite and important element in the record of the Galilaean

¹ There is a large literature on the language of our Lord. See Roberts, *Greek the Language of Christ and His Apostles* (1888); W. H. Simcox, *Language of the New Testament* (1889); T. K. Abbott, *Essays*, chiefly on the Original Texts of Old Testament and New Testament (1891); Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, English translation (1902).

² The only passage where the Sadducees are mentioned outside Jerusalem is Mt. xvi. 1-12, a passage which may have been displaced.

ministry. There were scribes—that is, men who had made a profession of studying the law—even in villages, and the scribes are more often mentioned than any other representatives of what we may term official Judaism in the portions of the Gospels relating to the Galilaean ministry.¹ There cannot be any reasonable doubt that in a city like Nazareth there would be members of this class. Their services would be required in relation to the worship of the synagogue, the local Sanhedrin, and the body of elders who would administer in accordance with the law the local government of the community. Less frequently are the Pharisees mentioned.² On one occasion, at least, we are specially told that those who disputed with our Lord had come down from Jerusalem,³ but no doubt in the larger cities of Galilee some members of the party might be seen who made themselves conspicuous by their religious pretensions and by their affected dress. Yet it is clear enough, from the narrative of the Gospels, that these aspects of religion were alien to the normal life of the country districts. They represent an element outside the religion of the people, regarded probably partly with respect, partly with resentment. Their religion was not the religion of Galilee. Jesus had learnt nothing from them.

There were other movements of thought that influenced Judaism, the echoes of which we find in the Gospels. There were the Herodians, the partisans of the Herod dynasty, who may probably have found in the brilliancy of that worldly monarchy a fulfilment of the national hopes of Israel. Twice they appear on the scene, once in Galilee.⁴ No doubt, as long as Antipas reigned and provided the people with peace and a considerable measure of security

¹ They are mentioned in St. Matthew twenty-three times, in St. Mark twenty-two times, in St. Luke fifteen times, in St. John not once (once in the *Pericope Adulterae*). The references cover the whole period of the ministry, but it is significant that the name is most common in proportion to its length in St. Mark.

² The Pharisees are mentioned in St. Mark twelve times, St. Matthew thirty-one times, St. Luke twenty-eight times, St. John nineteen times.

³ Mt. xv. 1.

⁴ Mk. iii. 6, xii. 13; Mt. xxii. 16.

and prosperity, he would have his convinced and enthusiastic supporters. Jesus, however, had for the Herodian dynasty no respect. There were, again, the movements against foreign taxation. It must be remembered that this was not now a burning question in Galilee. Although the movement against paying tribute received its name from that province, and there were the elements latent of a strong and even fanatical nationalism, yet so long as there was a national ruler like Antipas these movements were in abeyance. It was natural, therefore, that the question of the lawfulness of giving tribute to Caesar should be raised in Jerusalem, where it must have been one of practical politics, since Judaea was, after A.D. 6, directly under Roman rule.¹ There is, however, abundant evidence that Jesus was not concerned with any such movements, and that so far as He had come in contact with them they had aroused in Him nothing but antagonism. They were alien to the true religious tradition of Israel. The ardent nationalist had confused his religion with worldly and political hopes.

Some Jews in Palestine, and many outside, had been strongly influenced by Hellenic life and thought. In the study of the history of Apostolic Christianity the developments of Hellenistic Judaism demand careful attention, but we have in the Gospels no trace of Hellenism. It has been pointed out how Galilee was surrounded by Greek cities, and how near it was to the life of the world outside. The columns and the pediments of Greek temples must have been visible from many a hill-top. The customs of the Gentiles must have been a matter of knowledge and observation in a manner not possible in the villages of Judaea. While the holy city was remote from the direct traffic of the world, it flowed through Galilee. Ptolemais, Caesarea, Sebaste, Scythopolis, Gadara, Paneas, were all near, and exhibited many signs of idolatry. There was on Mount Carmel a temple of licentious nature worship. But all this influence was entirely external. The religion of the people was as little affected by Greek culture as is that of the fellaheen of Palestine at the present day by Western thought, and it is

¹ Mk. xii. 14-17; Mt. xxii. 17-21; Lc. xx. 22-25.

hard to find any traces of such influence in the Gospel narrative.

There was one movement of thought of which we can trace the influence—that which we are accustomed to call Eschatological or Apocalyptic. This means in its essence that transformation of Judaism which began in the Maccabean period, and built up the religious life of the people on the basis of belief in a future life. In this form it permeates the Gospel narrative. It was a movement of thought which was not confined to any one school, but had become the common inheritance of Judaism, the only exception being, of course, the Sadducees, who still clung to the old-fashioned theology. It is suggested that this development was a particular product of Galilee, and it has been maintained that the Apocalyptic writings which we possess were produced in that country. Of this there is no evidence. There may, perhaps, be this amount of truth in the statement, that in Galilee the influence of the temple cult, of the priests who attended to it, and of the Sadducean rulers must have been remote and slight; that the absorbing study of the law was less felt; and that there was room for a freer and more imaginative religious development.

The religion of Galilee was the inherited religion of Israel in the form that it had attained in the Herodian epoch. It was built up on the reading of the Scriptures and the teaching of the synagogues. It implied obedience to the law as the traditional principle of the life of Israel, but little interest in its too rigid interpretation. Galilee was, as the history of the Great War showed, intensely national and patriotic, but during the period of which we are speaking these elements were in abeyance. It was because it was not a home of Rabbinical knowledge, or the Pharisaic rule of life, that to the strict Jew Galilee was a place of contempt. "Search and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" "Galilee, Galilee, thou hatest the law, therefore thou shalt yet find employment among robbers," is a saying ascribed to Jochanan-ben-Zaccai.¹ To the Rabbis the people of Galilee

¹ *Jerus., Shabbath, 15d.* Jochanan-ben-Zaccai was a pupil of Hillel, and probably, therefore, a contemporary of our Lord. On

were "the people of the land." No such man can be pious, said Hillel. "To frequent the synagogues of the people of the land puts a man out of the world."¹ "This people that knoweth not the law is accursed."

There seems, on the whole, sufficient evidence to show that the great body of the people of Galilee did not belong to any of the Jewish sects of the day. They performed their religious duties—some well, some, no doubt, ill. They worshipped God as their fathers had worshipped Him, and although they might feel some attraction towards this or that movement of the times, they did not exhibit any tendency towards extravagant religious developments. The Pharisees might receive a certain amount of the respect that religious pretentiousness often obtains, but the burdens which scribe and Pharisee sought to impose would be resented.

In such an atmosphere Jesus grew up. At that time Galilee was religious, patriotic, and peaceful. The people adhered to the law, they went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem at the great festivals, they worshipped in the synagogues. Some discipline was administered by the local Sanhedrin. The local scribes were the depositories of legal knowledge, and attempted to raise the standard of observance. A less frequent figure was that of the Pharisee with his conspicuous dress, but occasionally a deputation might come down from Jerusalem on some special mission, as they did when John preached, and afterwards to Jesus. An atmosphere such as this is reflected in the Gospel narratives, especially in those portions which narrate the Galilaean ministry. They are true to the environment which they depict.

the estimation of Galilee see Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*, pp. 177-233. The criticisms on the strictures by Merrill, *Galilee in the Time of our Lord*, p. 104, are really beside the mark. No one supposes that Galilee was really a contemptible place, but there seems to be sufficient evidence, both Biblical and Talmudic, to show that the people of Jerusalem looked down upon the speech, the manners, and the customs of the provincial, and the learned ecclesiastics on the commonplace if devout religion of the country.

¹ *Pirke Aboth*.

III

The teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels is throughout expressed in language which clearly and exactly reflects the characteristics of the time when He lived. The theological implications of that fact do not at present concern us, nor the question as to the amount of authority that should be ascribed to statements which are expressed in the ordinary vehicle of the times for the expression of ideas. What it is important to recognize is that the science, the cosmology, the psychology implied in our Lord's words are those of the Jewish people of that day, and that on those subjects He makes no pretension to advance their knowledge. It will assist us in understanding the meaning and conditions of His teaching if we describe briefly the popular beliefs on these subjects.

The literature of later Judaism enables us to learn the sort of things that people believed or imagined on the structure of the world and the order of nature. The Book of Enoch, for example, contains a large amount of strange speculations on cosmological and astronomical subjects, on heaven and hell, on the motions of the heavenly bodies, on the causes of the changes of seasons and times. Ideas such as these must have been in the minds of those who heard our Lord's words, but it must be noticed, and it is a point of importance, that there is a complete absence in His teaching of anything resembling the fantastic imaginings that fill that work. In fact, it may be held that He wished to impress upon His hearers the unimportance of all such knowledge and speculation compared with a real spiritual insight: "Ye know how to discern the face of the heavens; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times."¹

The earth was conceived as a flat surface over which was stretched the vault of heaven. If a man travelled far enough he would reach "the ends of the earth whereon the heaven rests, and the portals of the heaven open."² Heaven was the abode of God and His holy Angels, and all the resources of imagination were employed in attempting to

¹ Mt. xvi. 3.

² Enoch, xxxiii. 2.

describe its glory and its awfulness. Daniel describes to us the majesty of God as judge of the earth:

"I beheld till the thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days did sit: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set and the books were opened."¹

Enoch more than once attempts in his visions to describe the wonders of the heavens:

"Behold, in the vision clouds invited me and a mist summoned me, and the course of the stars and the lightnings sped and hastened me, and the winds in the vision caused me to fly and lifted me upward and bore me into heaven. . . . And I beheld a vision, and lo! there was a second house, greater than the former, and the entire portal stood open before me, and it was built of flames of fire. And in every respect it so excelled in splendour and magnificence and extent that I cannot describe to you its splendour and extent. And its floor was of fire, and above it were lightnings, and the path of the stars, and its ceiling also was flaming fire. And I looked and saw therein a lofty throne: its appearance was as crystal, and the wheels thereof as the shining sun, and there was the vision of cherubim. And from underneath the throne came streams of flaming fire, so that I could not look thereon. And the Great Glory sat thereon, and His raiment shone more brightly than the sun and was whiter than any snow. None of the angels could enter and could behold His face by reason of the magnificence and glory, and no flesh could behold Him. The flaming fire was round about Him, and a great fire stood before Him, and none around could draw nigh Him: ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him, yet He needed no counsellor. And the most holy ones who were nigh to Him did not leave by night nor depart from Him."²

In heaven were not only the abodes of God and His angels, but also the "Mansions of the Elect and the Mansions of the Holy,"³ who "dwell in the garden of life."⁴ One

¹ Dan. vii. 9, 10.

² Enoch, xiv. 8-23, tr. Charles.

³ Enoch, xli. 2.

⁴ Enoch, lxi. 12.

writer describes to us this Paradise, which is in the third heaven:

“And these men took me from thence, and brought me to the third heaven, and placed me in the midst of a garden—a place such as has never been known for the goodliness of its appearance. And I saw all the trees of beautiful colours and their fruits ripe and fragrant, and all kinds of food which they produced springing up with delightful fragrance. And in the midst there is the tree of life, on which God rests, when he comes into Paradise.”¹

Here, too, were the treasures of the stars and the mansions of the sun and moon:

“And I saw the chambers of the sun and moon, whence they proceed, and whither they come again and their glorious return, and how one is superior to the other, and their stately orbit . . . and first the sun goes forth and traverses his path according to the commandment of the Lord of Spirits, and mighty is His name for ever and ever. And after that I saw the hidden and the visible path of the moon, and she accomplishes the course of her path in that place by day and night—the one holding a position opposite to the other before the Lord of Spirits. And they give thanks and praise and rest not; for unto them is their everlasting rest.”²

Here, too, were the portals of the winds:

“And at the ends of the earth I saw twelve portals open to all the quarters of the heaven, from which the winds go forth and blow over the earth.”³

Round about the earth were great mountains, where some at any rate fancied were the place of punishment and the paradise of the righteous. To the west, according to one theory, was Sheol,⁴ or the underworld, where the spirits waited until the day of judgment:

¹ Book of the Secrets of Enoch, viii. 1-3, ed. Morfill and Charles.

² Enoch, xli. 5-7.

³ Enoch, lxxvi. 1.

⁴ Hades or Sheol (Ἅιδης, שְׁאוֹל) was used in the Old Testament of the underworld, the abode of the dead, a hollow place under the earth, but its meaning had become extended, and might be used either in the Old Testament sense or in a modern sense as equivalent to Gehenna. In the last sense Enoch, xcix. 11: “Woe to you who spread evil to your neighbours; for you shall be

"These hollow places have been created for this very purpose, that the spirits of the souls of the dead should assemble therein, yea, that all the souls of the children of men should assemble here. And these places have been made to receive them till the day of their judgment and till their appointed period, till the great judgment comes upon them."¹

So to the east was Paradise,² or the Garden of the Righteous:

"And I came to the garden of righteousness, and saw beyond those trees many large trees growing there and of goodly fragrance, large, very beautiful, and glorious, and the tree of wisdom whereof they eat and know great wisdom."³

In the very midst of the earth was Jerusalem, "a blessed and a holy mountain,"⁴ and by it were deep and rocky ravines.

slain in Sheol." With the former sense compare Enoch, xxii. 3, quoted above.

¹ Enoch, xxii. 3, 4.

² The word "paradise" is generally considered to have been derived from the Persian (Zend, *pairidaēza*), where it was used to mean a park or garden. From there it passed both into Greek and Hebrew. In the Hebrew Old Testament it is used in its literal signification (Eccles. ii. 5; Neh. ii. 8); in the LXX. it is used also with a figurative meaning of Eden, see especially Ezek. xxxi. 8, 9, where Eden is called the Paradise of God: *καὶ ἐζήλωσεν αὐτὸν τὰ ξύλα τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τροφῆς τοῦ θεοῦ* (in A.V., "so that all the trees of Eden that were in the garden of God envied him"). In Apocalyptic literature it is used of the abode of the blest, and there are two Paradises, an earthly and a heavenly; so Secrets of Enoch, viii. 1, 3: "And these men took me from thence and brought me to the third heaven, and placed me in the midst of a garden. . . . And in the midst there is the tree of life, in that place, on which God rests, when he comes into Paradise" . . . the four streams which go forth from the tree of life "go down to the Paradise of Eden, between corruptibility and incorruptibility." So again, xlii. 3: "I went out to the East, to the Paradise of Eden, where rest has been prepared for the just, and it is open to the third heaven, and shut from this world."

Paradise was sometimes thought of in heaven, sometimes in the mountains of the East, sometimes, perhaps, as a part of Sheol, and was conceived either as the eternal home of the righteous, or the place where the righteous might await the judgment. Nor must we expect any clear or accepted teaching on the subject.

³ Enoch, xxxii. 3.

⁴ Enoch, xxvi. 1.

The one was the valley of judgment, the other, Gehenna,¹ the valley of punishment:

“ This accursed valley is for those who are accursed for ever; here shall all the accursed be gathered together who utter with their lips against the Lord unseemly words and of His glory speak lewd things. Here shall they be gathered together, and here shall be their place of punishment. In the last days there shall be upon them the spectacle of righteous judgment in the presence of the righteous for ever: here shall the merciful bless the Lord of Glory, the Eternal King.”²

These extracts are given as specimens of the sort of picture of the world which the contemporaries of our Lord constructed. When fancy and imagination are the sole source of knowledge there will be little exactness or consistency of portrayal. Each speculator will construct his scheme of the universe as he pleases, and it is unwise to

¹ Gehenna (γέεννα, Heb. גֵּי הִיָּם) represents both as a name and an idea a development of Old Testament usage. Originally it meant the deep valley to the south of Jerusalem, which was for ever accursed in Jewish eyes as the place where children were burnt to Moloch. The preparation for later usage is found in Jer. vii. 32, 33: “ Therefore, behold, the days come, said the Lord, that it shall be no more called Topheth, nor the valley of the sons of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter; for they shall bury in Topheth, till there be no place to bury. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.” In this passage the death is purely physical, and the prophet depicts the slaughter of the Israelites just in the place where they had sinned most deeply. The conception is the same in Isa. lxvi. 24. The idea of a future punishment first occurs in Dan. xii. 2, and is developed at great length in the Book of Enoch in the passages quoted and others. The term Gehenna is used habitually in Rabbinic literature for the place of punishment, and no doubt was used much earlier, as the references to the accursed valley in Enoch show; but the earliest actual use of the term outside the New Testament appears to be in 4 Ezra, vii. 36 (ed. Box, p. 124). *The furnace of Gehenna shall be made manifest and over against it the Paradise of delight.* Of course, it is quite easy to rewrite other passages so as to get it in, as Charles does (*Assumpt. Mosi*, x. 10).

² Enoch, xxvii. 2.

attempt to harmonize or discriminate the different theories. It is sufficient to realize that conceptions such as these would be what our Lord's words would raise in those who heard them, and that associations such as these would be attached to them.

We turn from the conception of the universe to that of human nature. The psychology of our Lord's words offers no apparent change from that of the Old Testament. It is popular and primitive, and must not be judged from a scientific or philosophical point of view; but it has one characteristic of great importance. It presents a clear conception of the unity of human nature. There is no dualism.

The words used in the New Testament, as in the Old, and as in all primitive systems of thought, to describe the nature of man, are all in their origin material—body, flesh, heart, soul, spirit; to none of them can fixed meanings be assigned or definite functions be allotted. They are used often with meanings that overlap, and it may be considered that they rather describe the human being from a particular point of view than represent some particular part of a man, a means of dividing him up according to different elements of which he was believed to be composed. The heart,¹

¹ Heart, καρδία, Heb. לֵב, לֵבָב (*leb, lebab*), is used in the Old Testament of the inner life 257 times, of the emotions 166 times, of the intellect 204, of volition 195. In the Gospels (Mt. 17; Mc. 12; Lc. 23; Jn. 7) it is used of the inner man, as "God knoweth our hearts" (Lc. xvi. 15), "Let not your heart be troubled" (Jn. xiv. 1); of the emotions (Mt. xxii. 37): "Thou shalt love with all thy heart" (here it is coupled with "soul"); of the intellect (Lc. v. 22): "Why do ye reason in your hearts?" (Mt. xiii. 15); of the will or purpose (Mt. vi. 21): "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be"; of the moral nature (Mt. v. 8): "the pure in heart." It may be the source of good or evil: "From within out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murders," etc. (Mc. vii. 21); so (Jn. xiii. 2) the devil puts it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus. The heart rather than the flesh seems to be the home of evil. "We still use the term 'heart' in a popular psychical sense, but every educated man knows that he is using it metaphorically. What the educated man frequently does not know, or, at any rate, forgets, is the fact that such usage is not metaphor in the Bible, but represents the extent of current scientific knowledge" (H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, pp. 21, 22).

for example, was looked upon as the place where what we call the mental and emotional functions of a man have their seat. It might be used in a purely physical sense. It might be looked upon as the seat of thoughts, of passions, of appetites and affections. It might be used of the understanding, of the will and character. It might be used generally of the whole inner man. It represents the human personality as looked at from the point of view of what was believed to be the physical location of its higher being. We can use the word in almost exactly the same way, but with us it is the survival of an archaic phraseology, and is consciously metaphorical.

The word "soul,"¹ or *psyche*, meant the principle of life, the ultimate cause which makes a man an animated living being, and as all his mental characteristics were supposed to be derived from this living principle, it came to mean the soul as the seat of feelings, desires, and affections, and has often just the same meaning as the heart. As in these characteristics might be held to lie the true nature of the man, it might be used as our word "personality"; and as it was that which constituted the source of being, it was looked upon as that which gave permanence to man, which

¹ Soul, *ψυχή*, Heb. נֶפֶשׁ (*nephesh*), is used in the Old Testament of the principle of life (282 times), in a psychical sense (249), of the person (223). The starting-point is animistic; "the actual principle of life is credited with its emotional manifestations, and at the same time may denote their subject or agent" (Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 17). In the Gospels (Mt. 16; Mc. 9; Lc. 14; Jn. 10) its primary meaning is life—Mt. xx. 28: "to give his life a ransom for many"; as such it is coupled with the body: "Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, or your body what ye shall put on" (Mt. vi. 25), but it comes to be used of the soul or principle of life which is more permanent than the body: "Fear not those that are able to kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul"; "Fear rather him that is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt. x. 28); and hence the two meanings "life" and "soul" are contrasted. "He that seeks to save his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Mt. x. 39). As in the Old Testament, it is used of man's psychical nature: "Ye shall find rest for your souls" (Mt. xi. 29); as the seat of the emotions: "My soul is very sorrowful" (Mt. xxvi. 28); "Now is my soul troubled" (Jn. xii. 27). In this sense it corresponds to *καρδιά*.

was not dissolved by death, which in a particular way survived the life in this world. While it might represent higher functions than the body, it might be used in contrast to the spirit, as something characteristically human, as opposed to what was spiritual and in harmony with the divine.

Similar, and yet different in range, was the use of the word "spirit."¹ The breath which animates and vivifies the body—something invisible, unseen, and yet potent in its force—might be looked upon as the source of all that was highest in him. So it might be used of his rational nature, of his will, of his desires. It might seem sometimes to be used in the same way as the soul for the more permanent element in human nature, or it might be contrasted with the soul as representing something akin to the divine in antithesis to what was human. It was a man's self, or his higher self, or it might be that element in him which responded to the influence of God's Spirit, or of the power of evil. There were spiritual powers or principles in the world, good or bad, and what was spiritual in man was easily influenced by spirits outside.

Looked at from the material side a man might be described as body² or flesh. As a body he was looked upon as an organism, a being composed of many parts rationally bound together; as flesh or flesh and blood he was looked at from the point of view of the material of which he was formed. As a man was known by his bodily form, the term "body" might convey the meaning of personality, and the human body was conceived of in some form or other as surviving death—both soul and body suffer in Gehenna.

¹ The spirit, πνεῦμα, Heb. רוּחַ (*ruach*), occurs with considerable frequency in all the Gospels, but with great variety of usage and rarely with a psychological meaning. Generally it is used either of the Divine Spirit or of evil spirits. It is contrasted with the flesh once in our Lord's words (Mc. xiv. 38), but it is not used normally as it is in St. Paul of the human spirit.

² The body, σῶμα, is the human body looked on as an organism, and is the visible and material aspect of man's personality. It is vitalized by the ψυχή, and inspired by the πνεῦμα, but it is a necessary, an inseparable, and permanent part of man. Soul and body alike suffer in Gehenna (Mt. x. 28).

The term "flesh"¹ meant originally the material substance out of which a man is formed. But that material substance was conceived as in a sense the seat of everything in man which was not divine. It would include, therefore, his whole human nature—his desires and affections so far as they seem to be associated with his fleshly nature. The natural body might be the home of evil influences, so it might be used in contrast to the spirit, yet it was never looked at as necessarily evil. It might be cleansed and purified, just as the spirit might become evil.

No single one of these terms used psychologically implies a separate function of mankind or a separate division of the human being apart from other divisions. A more correct explanation is to say that each of them looks at the human personality from a particular point of view. No one of them was the source of evil in mankind; each of them might be dominated by evil or by good. They represent aspects, not parts of a man. Hence there is no dualism in the conception of human nature. The future life was conceived of as lived in the body. At the Resurrection the body arose, although it would be transformed and purified. If a man were evil, evil permeated his whole being; if a man were good, his nature would be transformed. It would not be destroyed.

Neither the source of good nor the source of evil lay in a man's self. Both alike came to him from outside, for the world was peopled by innumerable spiritual beings, some good, some evil, which were the source of good and ill to mankind.

¹ The flesh, *σάρξ*, Heb. בָּשָׂר (*basar*), is not of frequent recurrence in the Gospels, and does not have the importance it possesses as a psychological term in St. Paul (Mt. 3; Mc. 3; Lc. 1; Jn. 11). Flesh and blood represent the material elements out of which a man is made, and so the flesh may be used for the personality: "they twain shall be one flesh" (Mt. xix. 6). It is contrasted with *πνεῦμα*—once in St. Matthew and St. Mark—"the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak", (Mt. xxvi. 41; Mc. xiv. 38), and once in St. John: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (Jn. vi. 63). But it is characteristic of the absence of anything like dualism in the use of the term, or in the conception of the human personality, that spiritual communion with our Lord should be described as eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

In popular thought in the time of our Lord, the lore of Angels played a great part. It had its roots in pre-exilic theology, where the Angel, as messenger of Jehovah, seems often to be identified with Jehovah himself. In post-exilic times, whether owing to Babylonian or Zoroastrian influence, or to the emergence and development of native beliefs, the doctrine of Angels occupied in some circles of thought and certain types of literature a conspicuous place. The belief was not, indeed, universal. While the Essenes laid great stress on it, the Sadducees denied the existence of Angels or spirits. The Pharisees, however, the popular religious thought, and above all the Apocalyptic literature, were strongly influenced by it. In Daniel the Angels are conspicuous; still more in Enoch. It tells us of the thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand who stood before the Lord of Spirits. It enumerates the four Angels of the Presence, or, as they came to be called, Archangels: Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Phanuel. Special work is assigned to each of these and others who are elsewhere mentioned by name. There are angels that preside over each country and nation. They represent the majesty and glory of God, and also are His messengers to mankind. In particular the law is said to have been given through Angels, and the whole of the Book of Jubilees is a further revelation which arises through them. They guard the souls of men, they control and have power over evil spirits, they preside over Tartarus and are the agents of punishment. No doubt they filled a very wide place in popular thought.¹

This belief is reflected in our Lord's words, but the place that it occupies is not large. In one case in the Gospels an Angel is mentioned by name, but never by Him. With Him they are spoken of as the guardians of mankind, and especially of little children; they represent the providential

¹ The current belief in Angels can be illustrated most fully from the Book of Enoch. On their names see Enoch, xx., xl.; in relation to the phenomena of nature, lxi., 10; in relation to punishment, liii. 3; of the fall of Angels, vi.; of the law given by Angels, Gal. iii. 19, Heb. ii. 2; and Jubilees, i. 27: "And He said to the angel of the presence: 'Write for Moses from the beginning of creation till My sanctuary has been built among them for all eternity.'"

care of God for man.¹ More particularly (as is natural) are they mentioned as the agents of divine judgment and punishment. The Angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; "there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth."²

Just as there are good spirits, so there is a great army of evil spirits. Even more than the lore of Angels, the lore of demons occupied people's minds. The belief in them came from many sources. They were the false gods of heathen nations, the fallen Angels, the offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men.³ They had many and strange names. They had taught mankind all the evil arts—enchantments, astrology, omens, fornication, and the arts associated with it. Through them sin and wickedness had come into the world. Everywhere they were present, the source of evil, suffering, and misery.

This belief, also, is reflected in our Lord's words. They were under a supreme head who is spoken of as Satan and Beelzebub, as the devil, the evil one, the tempter.⁴ There are also many subordinate spirits. It must be recognized that it was held that many of the physical and spiritual evils to which men are exposed come from the work of evil spirits; certainly all forms of what we should call mental or nervous disease, lunacy, madness, epilepsy, and deafness, dumbness, and blindness. So, also, the source of human wickedness lies in the temptations of the evil spirit. It is because Satan enters into his heart that Judas decides to betray Jesus;⁵ it is the devil that tempts our Lord; it is the evil spirits that dwell in man who are the source of all wickedness. Opposed to God and His rule is a kingdom

¹ Mt. xviii. 10: "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

² Mt. xiii. 41, 42.

³ See especially Enoch, vi. ff.

⁴ Satan. The lore about Satan was rich and varied. The most interesting passage is Job i. 6-12, ii. 1-10. On Satan in our Lord's words see Mt. iv. 10; Mk. iii. 23, iv. 15, viii. 33; Lc. x. 18. The demon lore in Enoch is full, as is the angel lore. See especially Enoch, xl. 7.

⁵ Lc. xxii. 3; Jn. xiii. 27.

of evil which represents the embodiment of all wickedness. This does not take away human responsibility. It is only because man prepares a home for him, and because his heart is empty, swept, and garnished, that the devil can enter in; it is only because he listens to temptation that he falls. But man is weak, and the devil is powerful and subtle, so that man easily succumbs.

These two doctrines of Angels and spirits were part of the popular belief of the time and are reflected in our Lord's words, nor is there any reason to think that He did not share the belief. But they express two fundamental truths. The ministry of Angels signifies the providential care of God for mankind. The belief in a personal evil spirit and a kingdom of evil implies that sin is no part of man's nature. His flesh may be weak, his heart may become full of evil imaginings; but the source of these is outside him. He listens to temptation, but it comes to him. No part of him is necessarily evil, no part of him need be cast away. For if the evil be cast out from him the Divine Spirit of God may dwell in him and sanctify the whole of his nature. It is not the material part of him that is the cause of evil, and redemption means not the destruction but the sanctification of the body.

IV

So far as may be judged by His recorded words, our Lord in all cases spoke in accordance with the intellectual conceptions of the day. On any subject on which discovery or advance was possible for the human mind He added nothing to thought. It was not His work or function. He spoke in the language and according to the ideas of those whom He addressed. The same is true of the expression of His religious teaching. His teaching was throughout drawn from the Jewish Scriptures, and the language that He used was in greater or less degree the natural theological language of those who heard Him. Its originality, its profound originality, will become apparent as our story proceeds. At present we are concerned with the meaning and origin of the terms that He used, with the sources from whence they came, and with the influences that are clearly traceable

in His teaching. In this investigation we come now to our Lord's use of the Jewish Scriptures.

It must be recognized, indeed, that we cannot hope to be able to attain great exactness in such a study. We have our Lord's words in translations, and they have passed through one or two stages before our records. We cannot analyze His use of the Old Testament as we can that of St. Paul, for example. It is always possible that a passage introduced by the writer by way of illustration has become part of our Lord's words. The translation into Greek may very probably have been taken from the existing translations, and so we should be unable to say how far we may have the exact words used. We cannot make deductions from single passages, but if certain broad results come from our investigation and we find that the same books have a tendency to be quoted throughout the record, the results attained may be considered trustworthy.

We find that our Lord makes a considerable use of the actual words of the Old Testament, but not to such an extent as to take from the originality and spontaneity of His teaching. The quotations range over the greater part of it; they are numerous from the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Psalms, occasional from the Historical Books, but very rare from the Wisdom Literature. Of four books in particular He made a marked use: the Book of Deuteronomy, the prophetic expression of the law; the Book of Psalms, the expression of Israel's spiritual life; the Book of Isaiah, the most evangelical of the prophets; and the Book of Daniel, the source of current eschatological thought.¹ It will be found, moreover, that this indebtedness means not

¹ The following are the number of quotations of each book as I have computed them:

Used frequently: Deuteronomy 20, Psalms 22, Isaiah 20, Daniel 10.

Less frequently: Genesis 7, Exodus 9, Leviticus 6, Jeremiah 5, Zechariah 6, Hosea 4.

Seldom quoted: Numbers 1, Samuel 2, Kings 3, Chronicles 1, Proverbs 1, Job 1, Ezekiel 3, Joel 1, Malachi 3, Micah 2, Jonah 1, Zephaniah 1.

Not quoted: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai.

The quotations in St. John are less numerous than in the other Gospels, but come mainly from Psalms and Isaiah.

merely that great ideas are drawn from these books, but that there is that adoption of words and phraseology which we are accustomed rightly to look on as implying intimate acquaintance and profound study.¹ We shall see how John Baptist had drawn his teaching from such an intimate study of the prophets. We have abundant evidence that Jesus had lived in the words of God. "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Scriptures were God's word, and in them He lived.

In doing this He would be conforming to the practice of all religious men in Israel, but in the manner of doing it He exhibited a marked contrast. There were various contemporary methods of interpretation, of which we have some considerable knowledge. All these perverted the sense of the Bible or exaggerated some particular characteristic, and all these He deliberately put aside. He interpreted rather according to its most spiritual signification.

Most conspicuous among the Biblical schools of interpretation of the time was that which looked on the Scriptures purely from a legal standpoint. The law having come to be accepted as a guide for life to which a scrupulous adherence was demanded, it became necessary, as we have explained, to apply it to every circumstance, and to interpret it in such a way as to find the assistance required. It became necessary also to find some way of escape from regulations which, if rigidly enforced, would have been impossible. So a gigantic system of casuistry was built up, based on a hard, a minute, and a non-natural exegesis, and has been preserved to us in the pages of the Talmud. This method our Lord not only repudiated, but explicitly condemned. "Ye make the Word of God of none effect by your tradition," He said. "If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the pit?"

Then there was the Midrashic interpretation. This aimed at being interesting and edifying. Its purpose was the illustration of moral and religious truth by interesting

¹ Notice in Mt. v. 34, 35, how the words are taken from Is. lxvi. 1, Ps. xlviii. 2, although the context is quite different. Notice, again, the way in which the words of Mt. xiii. 32 come from Dan. iv. 12, 21.

stories. It rewrote the sacred narrative, and filled up many gaps. It collected a mass of tradition and folklore. It was often frivolous, sometimes indecent and offensive. The story of Jannes and Jambres, alluded to in the Epistle to Timothy, is an illustration. We have many works remaining in which we can study it. About a century earlier than our Lord's ministry was written the Book of Jubilees; very probably, somewhere contemporary with it, the work known to us as Philo's *Antiquities of the Jews*.¹ The stories, the illustrations, and the reconstruction of national history that this method supplied, were largely used (we have reason to believe) in the sermons of the synagogue, and have survived also in the Midrashic Commentaries. It is interesting, perhaps remarkable, that in our Lord's dealing with Scripture there is no trace of any such method.

Then, again, there was the allegorical interpretation. This, perhaps, was most common in Hellenistic writers. Its classical representative is Philo. It largely influenced the literature of Christianity. But it also prevailed in Palestinian literature, and we find examples in St. Paul. Natural and often impressive if occasionally employed for poetical or devotional use, it soon becomes extraordinarily tedious, and if used in relation to doctrine, it may be made to prove anything. Of this, again, we find little if any trace in our Lord's teaching.

In contrast to all these methods, our Lord's interpretation is simple, literal, and spiritual. He takes the words of the Old Testament in their plain and natural meaning, and makes them the vehicle for imparting the religious truths which were not, indeed, derived from the Old Testament, but represented the goal and end to which it pointed.

There is no reason to think that here, any more than in any other departments of thought, Jesus had knowledge of the scientific kind differing from that of His own time. He quotes the Pentateuch as the work of Moses, the Psalms as the work of David. He knows nothing of the two or

¹ The first translation in English, in a sense the first publication which has shown its significance, is that of Dr. M. R. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo now first translated from the Old Latin Version*. (London: S.P.C.K., 1917.)

more Isaiahs which delight modern scholars. He knows nothing of scientific exegesis or critical history. These were matters which concerned Him as little as the correct motions of the heavenly bodies, or the geological history of the earth. He did not come to teach science or criticism. He came to teach religion. He had read and pondered over the Scriptures in the Hebrew tongue. They were part of His very being, the food of His mind. In them, as nowhere else, God spake. And with an insight which was divine He learnt from them, in a way in which no prophet of Israel had yet learnt, their message for mankind.

A careful study of the Gospels thus reveals to us the fact that, so far as regards what we may call the mental equipment that they display, it is that of the writers' own epoch. We are not yet concerned with any direct enquiry as to the nature and personality of Jesus of Nazareth; we are at present only concerned with an examination of the evidence which the records that we possess yield, and it is undoubted that they do not reveal any secular knowledge which transcends the natural environment of the time. Although the Gospels which we possess are written in Greek, there are signs that they record speeches which were originally delivered in Aramaic, the language current in Palestine at the beginning of the first century. The religious phraseology, the conception of the universe, the psychology, the scientific ideas, the social conditions are all those of His own generation. If we are to understand them aright, it can only be from the point of view of the time when they were written, and of the conditions of thought that prevailed. Jesus speaks in the language of the day; He is concerned with the thoughts and aspirations then current. His words would be such as would be comprehensible to any peasant of Nazareth or fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. We must learn to interpret Him from His environment.

But this investigation into the conditions of His environment will give us further assistance. It will form a not inadequate means of testing the authenticity of our Lord's teaching. We know that its starting-point must have been the Old Testament religion, and in particular the Old Testament Scriptures. A test of the teaching ascribed

to Him, which may be applied with some degree of certainty, will be whether it is of such a character as might reasonably, so far as the vehicle of expression goes, be derived from those Scriptures, or from the current religious conceptions of the day. For it is as true of the form in which the teaching of our Lord is given as of His other intellectual characteristics that it must be natural to the day. There must be no anachronism in it.

Let us apply this principle in certain details. We have seen that one of the books which, as is shown by clear signs, had influenced the mind of Jesus is the Book of Daniel. Amongst the most interesting and, in some ways, novel conceptions of that book is that of the kingdom of God: "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."¹ "His kingdom is an everlasting dominion, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."² The expression was, in this definite form, novel, although it was the natural and legitimate interpretation of the visions of the prophets who had described in such glowing colours the day of the Lord. It is this expression—probably one that had become common in current phraseology—that Jesus adopts, and makes the central feature of His teaching and thought. Through it He presented His ethical, religious, and social Gospel.

A study of the Book of Psalms, of the prophet Isaiah, and of Daniel will present us with a series of titles, some of which had already been used with a Messianic signification, some had not. The Psalms spoke of the anointed King, who was also the Son of God; the Book of Isaiah, in its later chapters, had pictured the servant of Jehovah as one through whom the hopes of Israel would be fulfilled; Daniel had seen the vision of one like unto a Son of man exalted in glory. It seems entirely natural that it should be through these titles that our Lord should present His mission. He had learnt them from the books that He had read, and they were titles in a greater or less degree recognized and known. In

¹ Dan. ii. 44.

² Dan. vii. 27.

and through them He had thought of His mission. In and through them He taught it.

But the Book of Isaiah revealed other traits which He had learnt. He had thought of Himself as the Servant of Jehovah "who would proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." But the servant had been depicted as one whose lot was suffering, rejection, scorn, sorrow; as one who was to bear other persons' transgressions and sorrows, who was an offering for sin, to bear the sins of others, whose triumph would come through his suffering. So from the beginning there is a note of sorrow in His teaching, an expectation of the end, a conception of Himself not as triumphant, but as rejected, a knowledge that it was through His death salvation would come.

If we take all the main lines of thought which we find in the Gospel teaching, it will become apparent that it has its root and starting-point in the Old Testament, not as interpreted conventionally, but as Jesus would read it. All these ideas are natural to the time and situation, and therefore we may with full confidence accept the teaching as original and authentic. We may study it as the teaching of Jesus, not merely of the Church. For the new conception, which in this case is the realization of the spiritual significance of the Old Testament, is the work, not of the successors, but of the founder. It was He who had studied the Scriptures as no one had ever done before, and saw what they meant and to what they pointed.

This was the starting-point. But through His divine impulse was thus created a germinant idea, simple and almost unimpressive in its origin, which became the source of new spiritual life to all future generations, continually revealing deeper potentialities. It is the history of this idea, which begins in the transformation of the Old Testament, that we have to trace.

CHAPTER III

JOHN THE BAPTIST

WHEN Pontius Pilate became governor of Judaea it was not an unnatural expectation that the day of the Lord was at hand. The religious-minded Israelite had grievously suffered. Since the great days of the Maccabees blow had fallen upon blow. The failure of the high-priestly dynasty, the coming of the Romans, the fall of Jerusalem, the continuous devastation of foreign and domestic warfare, the insolence of Herod and his sons, the loss of independence, and the outrage of foreign taxation imposed on the holy people—were not these the birth-pangs of the Messiah?¹ And now in the place of a succession of governors who, if foreigners, had governed with some measure of justice, had come Pontius Pilate, deliberately sent, as it seems, by Sejanus to insult the prejudices of the Jews, and marking the culmination of the infamy.

Nor if he turned to the rulers among his own people had such an Israelite any ground for consolation. An almost contemporary writer, the author of the *Assumption of Moses*,² who lived shortly after the beginning of the century, tells of the rule of pestilent and insolent men claiming to be righteous, of their avariciousness and their gluttony. They were devourers of poor men's houses, under pretence of justice. They were full of iniquity; from sunrise to sunset they cried: "Give us banquets and luxury, let us eat and drink, so will we reckon ourselves great men." They trafficked with the unclean; they spoke great words:

¹ On the "birth-pangs," a regular Messianic phrase (Mk. xiii. 8), or woes of the Messiah, see Volz, *Jüdische Eschatologie*, p. 173 ff.

² On the *Assumption of Moses* see above, p. 50, the edition of Charles, 1897, and in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, ed. Charles, vol. ii., pp. 407-424, and Schürer, *Geschichte*, iii., p. 213.

"Touch me not lest thou shouldst pollute me where I stand." It is the popular judgment on the Sadducean aristocracy, the arrogant and avaricious sons of Annas. But does not the writer suggest also that the pious Jew resented the religious pretensions of the Pharisees, who claimed to be pre-eminently the just, and to preserve their purity by keeping themselves aloof from the common herd? We shall hear later a repetition of these charges from more authoritative sources.

The writer proceeds to describe the future as he imagined it. There will come a period of great wrath and vengeance for all such, and a time of renewed and more violent persecution, and the righteous shall perish. Then the kingdom of God shall appear, and the devil shall have an end, and sadness shall be taken away. The Heavenly One shall arise from the throne of His kingdom, and shall come out of His holy habitation with indignation and wrath for His children. The earth shall quake, the heavens be darkened, the sea shall fall into the abyss, the fountains of waters shall fail, because the Most High God, the Eternal, the Only God shall arise to punish the nations.

"Then shalt thou be happy, thou O Israel,
 And shalt mount on the neck and wings of the eagle,
 And the days of thy sorrow shall be ended,
 And God shall exalt thee
 And bring thee to the heaven of the stars,
 The place of his habitation.
 And thou shalt look from on high, and behold thy adversaries on
 the earth
 And shalt know them and rejoice,
 And give thanks, and acknowledge thy Creator."

The preservation of this document illustrates for us the bitterness, the suffering, and the expectations, half religious, half secular, of the times when John the Baptist and our Lord preached. There was the soil in which the seeds of teaching might quickly grow and fructify. There was an anxious and wistful hope among the people who were soon to hear proclaimed more authoritatively than ever before, but in a novel and unexpected way, the cry, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

I

It was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius¹—that is, sometime between August A.D. 28 and August A.D. 29—that a new prophet appeared in Israel, the last of the great roll of the prophets of the old dispensation.² John, the son of Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth, was of priestly race.³ He was born of pious parents—"they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless"—who dwelt not in Jerusalem among the great families of the priests, but in the hill country of Judaea, the home of Jewish piety. It was said of him that from his earliest years, like a Nazarite, he drank no wine nor strong drink. Even from his mother's womb he was filled with the Holy

¹ The fifteenth year of Tiberius was counted from August 19, A.D. 28, to August 18, A.D. 29. On this date see the Chronological Notes.

² Our sources for our knowledge of John the Baptist are—(1) Certain passages in St. Mark's Gospel, viz., Mc. i. 2-11, 14; ii. 18; vi. 14-29; xi. 30-33. (2) A considerable number of passages found in St. Matthew and St. Luke and undoubtedly derived from *The Discourses*: (a) Mt. iii. 7-17; Lk. iii. 7-17; (b) Mt. xi. 2-19; Lk. vii. 18-27, 31-35; xvi. 16. The account in these Gospels of John's preaching and baptism is formed by a combination of the material in St. Mark and *The Discourses*. The information in the latter concerning John's teaching seems to be particularly good. (3) Some passages given by St. Matthew or St. Luke alone. There seems no reason why these also should not be derived from *The Discourses*, as there is no reason for thinking that the common matter exhausted the contents of that document. There was nothing about him derived from the Lucan special sources. (4) The birth narratives in Lk. i. (5) Independent traditions given by St. John (Jn. i. 19-42; iii. 22-36; iv. 1-3). Much diversity of opinion prevails about them. By some they are looked upon as not historical at all. They are used with some criticism, but with little hesitation in the present account. (6) An account contained in Josephus, *Antt.*, xviii., 116-119. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of this passage. See Schürer, *Geschichte*³⁴, i., 436-439; Abrahams, *Studies*, p. 30.

³ Lk. i. 5. Cf. *The Gospel according to the Hebrews* in Hilgenfeld, *Novum Testamentum extra canonem receptum*, iv., 33. But there is no reason for thinking this latter to be an independent authority. How far the stories in the first chapter of St. Luke are historical we cannot tell, but the conceptions of John's ministry and of the Messiah implied in them are early and of great interest.

Spirit. Like many other Israelites, like Elijah in the wilderness of Beersheba, like Amos the herdsman of Tekoa in the same uplands, he found in the solitudes of that uninhabited land a place for contemplation and life with God. There were others in those hard times who sought solitude among these mountains. The hills above the Dead Sea were the home of the Essenes, and Josephus tells us how he became the disciple for three years of a certain Bannus who lived in the desert, and "used no other clothing than that which came from the trees and had no other food than what grew of its own accord, and bathed himself in cold water frequently, both by night and day, to preserve his purity."¹ So John also was in the desert until his showing unto Israel.

To him, as to Jeremiah, as to any other Old Testament prophet, there came the word of God—that is, the clear and certain conviction that he was entrusted with a definite message for the people, and from his desert retreat he went out to preach to them. In appearance, too, he was like the prophets of old. Like Elijah he wore a rough mantle of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his long hair streamed down over his shoulders. He had lived on such food as the desert produced—locusts and wild honey.

His message, too, was simple, as had been those of the prophets. He was essentially a messenger of righteousness. "He bid the Jews," said Josephus, writing so as to suit Greek taste, "to practise virtue and righteousness towards one another and piety towards God." He came "in the way of righteousness," said our Lord. "Many of the children of Israel," the angel Gabriel is represented as foretelling, "shall he turn unto the Lord their God. He shall go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the righteous."

The burden of his preaching was: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The great day of the Lord would shortly come, the advent of the Messiah was near. "The axe was laid to the root of the tree." The Messiah would come for judgment. "Every tree, therefore, that brought not forth good fruit, would be hewn down and cast

¹ Josephus, *Life*, § 11.

into the fire." All men must prepare for this judgment by turning away from their sins, by a change of heart and life.

As a sign of this changed life, and the washing away of sins, those that came to him were baptized. The symbolism of washing as a sign of spiritual cleansing is almost universal, and prevailed widely in the Graeco-Roman world.¹ To be more correct, of course, it is true to say that the idea of spiritual purity was developed out of the physical purity which was so often an indispensable condition of early religious rites. Baptism began by being what we now term ceremonial, although it did not so appear in earlier times, and then became moral in its significance, and often it is difficult to distinguish the two ideas. Among the Jews the demand for ritual purity was exacting, and in order to attain it there were both for priests and people strict rules for lustrations. Water, too, became looked upon as a symbol for repentance, and a custom grew up at some uncertain time in the history of Judaism of bathing on the eve of the Atonement with confession of sins.² Among the religious devotees, also, of this time ceremonial and sacramental washings, for they are not easily distinguished, were common. We know of them among the Essenes, the instance of Bannus has been quoted, and now or at a somewhat later period arose the sect of Hemerobaptists, who are stated to have been distinguished, as their name implies, by a habit of daily baptism.³ A more important instance is one which may have been present in the mind of John and influenced his language. Certainly at a later date, almost certainly in the days of which we are speaking, it was the rule that all heathen who became Jews should be baptized.⁴ From men cir-

¹ See the article on Baptism in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. ii., which collects together the customs of a large number of different races.

² See Abrahams, *Studies*, pp. 36 ff., *Pharisaic Baptism*.

³ On the Hemerobaptists see Hegesippus ap. Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, iv., 22; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, I., i., 17, p. 37, ed. Petavius.

⁴ On the baptism of proselytes see Schürer, *Geschichte*³, iii., 129-132; Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*⁸, ii., 745; Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, iv., pp. 36-46. There seems quite adequate evidence for the custom of baptizing proselytes before the

cumcision, baptism, and sacrifice were required; from women (who were the larger number), baptism and sacrifice. The purpose of this baptism was, primarily at any rate, ceremonial. The heathen were in a state of uncleanness, and only if ritually clean could they be received "under the wings of the divine presence," so proselytism was described. There is, in fact, abundant evidence that baptism was a recognized symbol of moral purification, and a sign of the entry into a new life.

But none of these were the direct source of the Baptist's action. It must be recognized, and it will become more apparent as our history proceeds, that the inspiration of the last prophet was drawn directly from the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and in these baptism appears as a definite sign of the Messianic age. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you," it is said in Ezekiel,¹ "and ye shall be

fall of Jerusalem. (1) "The heathen was in a state of uncleanness, and must at least as emphatically as the Jew in a similar state have undergone the ritual of bathing. Only in a state of ritual cleanness would the newcomer be received 'under the Wings of the Divine Presence'—a common Rabbinic phrase for proselytism" (Abrahams, p. 36). (2) The Mishna has the following ruling: "A stranger who was proselytized on the eve of the passover?" The school of Shammai says, "He may be baptized and eat his passover in the evening"; but the school of Hillel says, "He who has just departed from the foreskin is as legally unclean as he who just departs from the grave" (*Pesachim*, viii., 8). (3) A story told in the Jerusalem Talmud strengthens this. "Rabbi Eleazar ben Jacob says: Soldiers were guards of the gates in Jerusalem; they were baptized and ate their paschal lambs in the evening" (*T. J. Pesachim*, viii.; *Tosefta Pesachim*, vii., 13). This must have been before the destruction of Jerusalem. (4) The ordinary Jewish rule laid down three rites for the reception of proselytes: circumcision, baptism, sacrifice. This rule must be earlier in its origin than the destruction of the temple. (5) On the other hand, I do not feel that the passage of the *Sibylline Oracles*, iv., 165, which demands baptism and repentance for the world, can be quoted, as it seems to me Christian and not Jewish. A Jewish document would not omit every distinctive Jewish rite. While there is, therefore, sufficient evidence for the rite, there seems little reason for seeing in it the origin of John's baptism, for it was ceremonial in character, and only intended to produce the necessary ceremonial purity.

¹ Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." "O Jerusalem," said Jeremiah, "wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved."¹ "In that day," said Zechariah, "there will be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."² Let us remember that John in his desert retreat was not only communing with nature, but with the word of God. That as he pondered over the Scriptures, and read the signs of the times, he became convinced that the day of the Messiah was at hand, and the divine will called him to prepare the way of the Lord. From the Scriptures he would learn the nature of the last things, the signs of the coming, and the way to prepare. Baptism with water was, it seemed, clearly laid down as part of the method of preparation, and so in obedience to the word of God, as the prophets had foretold, he called people to baptism in direct preparation for the coming of the Messiah.³

The condition of this baptism which John preached was repentance; it was accompanied by a confession of sins, and its result would be in the Messianic times which were to come a remission of sins. The exhortation of the Baptist was to repent. Once more we have an echo of the prophets' message: "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts."⁴ "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God."⁵ "Wash you, make you clean," said Isaiah; "put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes;

¹ Jer. iv. 14.

² Zech. xiii. 1.

³ The word "baptism" is one of those which are a new creation. The verb βαπτίζω was used in classical writers as the intensive of βάπτω, and seems generally to have implied being overwhelmed in the water, totally immersed. It was rarely used in the LXX. The nouns βαπτισμός, βάπτισμα, and βαπτιστής do not seem to be used except of Johannine or Christian baptism (in the New Testament and in Josephus). The phraseology was created by Christianity, and it is thus a sign of a rite with a new significance, and, like some other of the fundamental words of Christianity, was not derived from the LXX. It belongs to the time when Christianity was preached in Aramaic, and the colloquial Aramaic was translated into Greek.

⁴ Zech. i. 3; see also Mal. iii. 7.

⁵ Hos. xiv. 1.

cease to do evil; learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."¹ Ezekiel had spoken of the clean heart, the result of sprinkling. "A new heart also will I give you . . . and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."² The meaning of this Messianic baptism was to turn away from sin, and to change the heart, and to turn unto the Lord as the Prophets had always preached.³ So all who came to John to be baptized must confess their sins—"they were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins." This was clearly the necessary preparation for the new life. And the end of the Messianic days to which this preparation pointed would be the forgiveness of sin. Those who really confessed and repented of their sins, who changed their heart and life and were baptized, would, when the Messiah came, have their sins forgiven, and be held fit for the Messianic kingdom.

So John's baptism was essentially ethical. The exact relation between repentance and baptism, the relation between the symbol and the thing symbolized, would be in this case as difficult to define as it is really futile to enquire. It was enough to know that repentance, confession, baptism, a new life were essential, that the result would be remission

¹ Is. i. 16, 17.

² Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

³ The word "repentance" (*μετανοεῖν, μετάνοια*) is another instance of a word used in a new sense in Christian literature. In classical literature the word means change of mind or after-thought; in the LXX. it is used as the translation of *נָחַם*, meaning to grieve or be sorry for sin, but the Christian use is for the prophetic *שׁוּב*, which means to turn from sin, and is generally translated by *ἐπιστρέφω*. Its new meaning is a transformation and renewal of life, a change from sin, and a putting on of holiness. It is noted that neither word occurs at all in the Gospel or Epistles of St. John. It is for the most part a Lucan word. "An examination of these few passages would seem to show that the teaching of Jesus, which the disciples cared most to preserve, did not directly harp upon the mere term and word 'repentance.' Jesus took a more original line of effecting an end, one common both to himself and to John. He encouraged, stimulated, comforted. He did not merely din a summons to repentance into people's ears" (Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, ii., 463).

of sins.¹ It is apparently some such conception as this that Josephus desires to represent in the stilted language in which he describes John's baptism. "Baptism," he said, "would be acceptable to God, if it was looked upon, not as a means of passing over certain sins, but as a purification of the body, when the soul had already been purified by righteousness." That is, it was not a magical formula which would bring immunity from the effects of sin, it was not a mere ceremonial rite, but its value depended on the cleanness of the heart. It was that elevated, ethical, religious ordinance which we call a sacrament.

It may be that the first preaching of John was in the desert where he had learnt his message, but probably that was not the case. As soon as he became conscious of his mission he would go out among men, and his conception of the need of baptism would impel him to the sacred banks of Jordan that he might baptize there. The scene of his ministry was the Jordan valley,² and the fact that some part of this valley was in Judaea, some in the territory of Herod Antipas, some belonging to the free cities of the Decapolis, would make it a safe refuge. If he began to preach in Judaea, it is probable that later on, after the Jewish hierarchy had shown an excessive and dangerous interest in his career, he crossed over to the opposite bank, where he would be in the jurisdiction of Antipas.

The scene of his activity then was, as St. Luke tells us, the valley of the Jordan, and the various places mentioned by St. John—Bethany or Bethabara, and Aenon or "the springs"—were in that neighbourhood.

Thither, when the news had gone forth that a new prophet had arisen, came a great multitude to hear him, says Josephus, and they heard him gladly. All Jerusalem and

¹ Forgiveness of sins (*ἀφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν*) is an expression used most commonly by St. Luke, and never by St. John. It occurs of the baptism of John in St. Mark, but was omitted apparently purposely by St. Matthew, who uses it only in connection with the Last Supper. It is used here of the characteristics of the Messianic Age. It became the distinctive expression used of Christian baptism.

² It was on the day that I was revising this passage that we learnt that British troops had occupied the Jordan valley.

Judaea came, says St. Mark, and were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins. Thither, too, came representatives of the great men of the Jews, of the Sadducees whose evil lives were so notorious, of the Pharisees who had learnt to trust in their own righteousness. They came to learn what he was like, to act as spies on him, perhaps to denounce and prosecute him. He detected their insincerity, and condemned it in language which revealed still more the purport of his message:

“Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

Here was the significant feature of John's message. It had become almost an axiom that to be an Israelite was all that was needed in the final judgment. The judgment had come to be looked at merely from the point of view of God's own people. They had suffered much in the past; the Gentiles had triumphed over them. When Messiah and the judgment came the position would be reversed. For the Gentiles were prepared wrath and destruction, for the holy nation rest and peace. They would rejoice when they saw the fate of their enemies and persecutors. The privileged position of being descended from Abraham was all that was needed as a condition of salvation in the Messianic days.

But John, as always, goes back to the prophetic message. He delivers the same call to Israel to repent as the prophets had delivered. He denounces, as they had done, the sins of the chosen people. No privilege will avail when God comes to judgment. He demands righteousness from all. The Pharisee would baptize the proselyte that all uncleanness might be removed. He is told that he, too, is unclean, in spite of his scrupulous adherence to the law. He must repent and change his life and bring forth fruits meet for repentance and confess his sins and be himself baptized. The Sadducee, the priest who offered the sacrifices for Israel, and purified himself when he performed his priestly rites, might say that he was pure and clean. His ritual

purity was useless. The coming of the Messiah was a revelation of righteousness, with righteousness would He judge, in righteousness must His people prepare for Him. The Baptist's message was to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Nor could he lay stress on his descent from Abraham. Just as Amos had threatened destruction to the sinners of Israel, just as Hosea had said, "Ye are not my people and I will not be your God," so John announces the divine wrath against the sinners of Israel in his day. Descent from Abraham will count as nothing. As God sent His Spirit into dry bones and they became a great army, so He might of the stones that lay around make children for Abraham.

Justice, mercy, charity are his message. "What shall we do?" said the people. "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none, and he that hath food let him do likewise." To the tax-gatherers he said: "Extort no more than is due to you." To the soldiers: "Be content with your pay, do not add to it by robbery and violence."

This simple and sincere message, so different from the religious fantasies of the day, went straight to the heart of the people. "All men counted John as a prophet." There was a great stir in the land, and, as was natural, the responsible spiritual rulers of the people desired to know who he claimed to be. His answer was clear and explicit. "He was not the Messiah." There had been much speculation and conjecture as to the preparation for the coming of the Messiah, and various messengers who would precede him, suggested by different passages in Scripture, had been described. He refused to be identified with any of these. Moses had spoken of the Prophet whom God would raise up like unto himself.¹ He was not that Prophet. Malachi had foretold how the Lord would send Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day, and much strange and curious legend had grown up round his name.² John would not allow that he was Elijah. He describes himself with terms of depreciation drawn from the great prophetic book which

¹ Deut. xviii. 15. On 'the Prophet' see Volz, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

² Mal. iii. 2, 3 f.; iv. 5 f. See Volz, *op. cit.*, 192; Edersheim, *Life*, ii., 706.

had inspired his teaching as "the voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."¹

Then, in clear unmistakable words, he speaks of the Messiah that is to come. One who comes after him will be greater than he. He was unworthy to perform even the most menial offices for Him. "I baptize with water, he will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He will sift the wheat from the chaff, he will gather the wheat into his garner and burn the chaff in unquenchable fire."

The outpouring of the Spirit, and the revelation of the Lord in fire, were alike characteristics of the Messianic age. Ezekiel,² immediately after speaking of the baptism with water, had said: "I will put my spirit within you." Zechariah³ had said: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication." Isaiah:⁴ "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." "I shall pour out my spirit upon all flesh," said Joel.⁵

And the revelation will be with fire. "Who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire."⁶ "Behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord."⁷ "Behold, the Lord will come with fire."⁸

Whatever may have been the original conception of the writers of these passages (most of them, indeed, were for them Messianic), and whoever may have been their authors, they certainly existed for John as clear revelations of the divine purpose. He believed the day of the Lord was at hand, and it was to him a great revelation of the spirit and power of God. All this he expresses in the terse, picturesque language

¹ Jn. i. 23. I have little doubt but that the fourth Gospel is correct in ascribing these words to the Baptist himself. They are drawn direct from the prophets, and would not have been used of him by others. The text others would use is, of course, Mal. iii. 5, as is shown by its insertion into the quotation from Isaiah in Mk. i. 1.

² Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

³ Zech. xii. 10.

⁴ Is. xlv. 3.

⁵ Joel ii. 28.

⁶ Mal. iii. 2.

⁷ Mal. iv. 1.

⁸ Is. lxvi. 15.

which characterizes his recorded utterances. The Spirit of God will come into the world and stir men's hearts and give them a new life. God's fire will burn in men's hearts; it will cleanse them from all evil and sin, and clear away the dross.¹ All the worthless it will consume away. The new heart which will be put into men will be free from all evil, and goodness will have the strength and power of fire. There will be an enthusiasm and zeal for all that is clean and bright and true such as has never been known before. The world is on the brink of a new age. "The world's great age begins anew."

The language, although derived from the prophets, is in its form and application new and creative. John had clearly a higher conception of what the Messianic age meant than his contemporaries. In their phraseology and thought they are different from the manner in which such ideas were expressed afterwards in Christianity. They are unique as they are original. They were the genuine utterances of John, as they were a true delineation of the real Messianic age. It may still remain a question whether they were a general picture of the age to come, or whether, as the fourth Gospel would suggest, they were directly applied to Jesus. The fact that they are preserved for us in a general form is no argument against their having a special application, as the Christian Church could never have considered that they were spoken with any other reference than that to Jesus, and the definite attribution of them as a prophecy of His coming

¹ On baptism by fire see Abrahams, *Studies*, pp. 44-45: "The idea is carried out most fully in a saying of Abbahu (end of third century). Schöttgen has already cited this parallel from T.B., Sanhedrin, 39a. Abbahu explains that when God buried Moses He bathed Himself in fire as it is written: 'For, behold, the Lord will come with fire' (Is. lxvi. 15). Abbahu goes on to say, 'By fire is the essential baptism,' and he quotes: 'All that abideth not the fire ye shall make to go through the water' (Num. xxxi. 23). Thus baptism by fire is the divine analogue to man's baptism by water. Man could not bear the more searching test." These Rabbinical parallels are interesting as showing that such ideas (as they were drawn from the Old Testament) were natural to Judaism, but they throw no light on the origin of John's teaching, which was drawn directly from the Old Testament.

in the fourth Gospel would be the interpretation which every Christian of the early Church would assume to be correct. But whether they were actually spoken after John had seen and known Jesus, or whether they had no reference to Him as originally spoken, must remain a question which does not admit of an easy solution.

II

Amongst those who came to John to be baptized was Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee. There seems no reason for thinking that previous to this He had been a religious teacher. The Gospel narratives all imply that it was after His baptism that His preaching began. He was known only as the carpenter, the son of Mary. Equally is it certain that He, like John, had met the religious questions of the day by an earnest and, as we have already learnt, a simple and spiritual study of the Scriptures; that men would have said of Him that He was stirred deeply by the things of religion; and that the news that a prophet had arisen in Israel would profoundly affect His thoughts and aspirations.

When Jesus came to be baptized we are told in one account how John prevented Him with the words, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" The answer that Jesus gave was, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness." He was baptized, and as He came out of the water He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God coming down on Him as a dove, and a voice from heaven saying: "Thou art my son, my beloved, in thee I am well pleased."

Such is the narrative. But the imagination must be allowed to picture what lay behind it. We need not think of John's baptism as impersonal and indiscriminate. Those who flocked from all sides to hear him would listen to his preaching, careless of any material comfort, living easily, as would always be possible in the warm Jordan valley, in the open air, eating the scanty food they had brought with them. They would be, for a time at any rate, his disciples, sitting at his feet. They would learn from him and reveal themselves

to him. Not all would wish to be baptized, not all would be admitted to baptism. Those who were baptized, we are specially told, would confess their sins. The master would reveal to the disciple and the disciple to the master his deepest thought. We learn from the fourth Gospel that John did not know Jesus until He came to him, a statement which may have been inserted because of the story of a relationship given by St. Luke. But Jesus could not come to be baptized without intercourse between the two. If Jesus heard the message of John, John would learn from Jesus His deepest visions.¹

John had spoken of himself as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Jesus, as soon as He begins His preaching, identifies Himself with the servant of the Lord.² From the Old Testament as a whole, and the book of Isaiah in particular, both alike had drawn their inspiration, and John would learn from his intercourse with Jesus that while to him had come the conviction that his mission was to prepare the way, Jesus knew that He was God's servant in a sense different to any other. And when at the baptism John learnt that Jesus had received the full consciousness of the gift of the Spirit, he would feel that He it was who should baptize with the Spirit and with fire, as he had foretold, while it was natural that Jesus should feel as God's servant that the whole scheme of divine and human righteousness must be fulfilled by Him. John must have known enough to feel that he desired that Jesus should bestow on him the fuller baptism of the Spirit which he expected, and

¹ On this compare Abbott, *Fourfold Gospel*, Section ii., *The Beginning*, p. 96: "Jesus arrived (we may reasonably infer from the context) not alone, but with other postulants for baptism. These postulants the prophet must have tested in some way before baptizing them. To test such a multitude—some of whom he rejected as being 'offspring of vipers'—must have taken time. For a time, then, Jesus may have been a disciple of John either in one and the same place, or 'following behind him' from place to place in the circle of the Jordan. True, Matthew tells us that John said to Jesus, 'I have need to be baptized of Thee'; but Matthew gives us no grounds for supposing that John said this to Jesus in view of any previous acquaintance or connection between them."

² Lk. iv. 17 ff.

to hesitate to baptize Him. The story as it is told is quite probable.¹

As Jesus came forth out of the water He saw the heavens opened, as Ezekiel had seen in his vision, and He saw the Spirit come down upon Him as a dove from heaven, and He heard the voice saying to Him, "Thou art my son, my beloved, in thee am I well pleased."

The account in St. Mark represents this vision as having been seen by Jesus only, and is probably correct; it may be doubted, also, whether John had any direct consciousness of it apart from what he learned from Jesus. The imagery employed suggests that the voice of God spoke as it had spoken to Samuel, and the symbol of a dove, suggested perhaps by the opening words of the book of Genesis, was natural in itself and in accordance with Jewish conceptions.²

¹ Compare Abbott, *Fourfold Gospel*, *ibid.*, p. 91. "By the laws of evidence—laws which men who know them are bound morally as well as logically to observe—we are not justified in accepting either the Matthaean or the Johannine tradition in its exact words, as having an authority equal to that of a saying of Christ supported by the threefold Synoptic testimony. But we are justified in accepting both as being neither inventions nor gross and absurd exaggerations, nor mere anachronisms, but honest and reasonable attempts to hand down, in a reasonable though somewhat idealized form, the Christian traditions, accepted at the time, about the attitude of John the Baptist towards Jesus of Nazareth. From a spiritual point of view, these early Christian traditions may well be regarded, even by the keenest and most ardent lovers of scientific and historical research, as being no overstatement, but perhaps an understatement of the truth." I should not be inclined to consider that a statement repeated in three Gospels is of greater value than that contained in one, but the importance of these words is that it reminds us that what lies behind an imperfect narrative is something more wonderful than it gives, not less so.

² Abrahams, *Studies*, v., pp. 47-50, gives full reference to this symbolism in Rabbinic literature. "It is quite in keeping with this whole range of ideas to find the Targum (Cant. ii. 12) interpreting as the 'voice of the Holy Spirit of Salvation' the text, the 'voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.' In particular, these ideas come into the interpretation of Gen. i. 2. 'The spirit of God was brooding on the face of the waters like a dove which broods over her young, but does not touch them'" (Cf. Talmud, Hagiga, 15a, Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, ed. 2, vol. i., p. 423). Compare also

The account of the vision or, as we should say in more modern language, spiritual experience, was probably derived direct from our Lord, and He described His experience, just as He did His experience in the Temptation, in a symbolism natural to the religious instincts of the day. There seems no reason for demanding a too literal interpretation of the words. To insist that there was a clear and audible voice heard by all round, and a real and physical dove, is to translate the language of poetry into prose. The spiritual experience was real, as real and profound as any such experience has been since the world began, but it is described, as all such experiences must be, in a natural symbolical language with phrases and with imagery suited to the time.¹

B. T. Barakthoth, fol. 3a: "I heard a *Bath-Qol* moaning as a dove and saying: Woe to the children through whose iniquities I laid waste My Temple."

¹ This is emphasized very strongly by Origen. In a fragment (No. 20) on St. John's Gospel (Brooke, *The Commentary of Origen on St. John*, i., p. 237) he argues: We must enquire how the Holy Spirit was seen by John. There are two ways of seeing, with the senses and with the understanding (*εἰς τε τὴν αἴσθησιν καὶ τὴν νόησιν*). The visions of prophets and holy men have always been seen with the understanding, and not the senses, for things which have no bodily form we can only see symbolically (*δι' ἀναλόγου τινός*). The Holy Spirit has no bodily form, and therefore is represented by the idea of a dove (*ὥς περιστερᾶς νόησιν δέχεται*). That the conception was thus symbolical is proved by the use of the phrase 'coming down' when the Holy Spirit is not affected by motion, which means change of place (*μεταβατικῶς οὐ κινουμένου*); by the expression 'remaining'—no one could see the Holy Spirit 'remaining'; by the statement that 'the heavens were opened,' which is a physical impossibility. And he ends, "All these things, then, I mean the coming down from heaven of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus and its remaining on Him, were written for edification (*οἰκονομίας ἔνεκεν γέγραπται*), and do not contain an historical narrative (*οὐχ ἱστορικὴν διήγησιν ἔχοντα*), but a vision of the understanding, as has been already said." A similar argument is used in *Contra Celsum*, i., 48: "For I do not suppose that the visible heaven was actually opened and its physical structure divided in order that Ezekiel should be able to record such an occurrence. Should not, therefore, the same be believed of the Saviour by every intelligent hearer of the Gospel? Although such an occurrence may be a stumbling-block to the simple, who, in their simplicity,

There is an early and interesting variation in the text of St. Luke's Gospel. A series of patristic authorities, starting from Justin, and deriving their information in all probability from the Gospel of the Hebrews, have substituted for the words of the message a quotation from the Psalms: "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee."¹ That this was not original may be considered quite certain. It arose partly from dogmatic causes, partly from the passage in the Psalms. The correctness of the ordinary text is substantiated on internal grounds. It combines the sonship

would set the whole world in movement, and split in sunder the compact and mighty body of the whole heavens. . . ." He describes it more as a matter known by a kind of divine perception than perceived by the senses, and in this way particularly explains Jn. i. 32-34.

¹ There is some textual and considerable patristic evidence for the reading, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee" (ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε). The earliest evidence for it is probably that in the Gospel of the Ebionites: "When the people had been baptized, Jesus also came and was baptized by John. And when He came up from the water, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending and coming upon Him. And a voice came from heaven saying, 'Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.' And again, 'This day have I begotten Thee.' And immediately a great light shone round about the place. And again a voice from heaven to Him, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And then John, falling down before Him, said, 'I beseech Thee, Lord, do Thou baptize me.' But He prevented him, saying, 'Suffer it to be so, for thus it is fitting that all things be fulfilled.' " But the narrative of the baptism is given with these words in Justin Martyr, *Dial.*, 88, 103; Clement Alex., *Paed.*, i., 6, 25; *Acta Petri et Pauli*, c. 29; Methodius, Lactantius, Juvenius, and *Const. Apost.* St. Augustine (*De consensu ev.*, ii., xiv., 31) states that these words are not found in the oldest Greek MSS. This reading is found, however, in D, and certain old Latin MSS. in St. Luke. There is no doubt that this reading was widely distributed at an early date, but both external and internal evidence is against its genuineness. It arose through the influence of the verse in the Psalms (ii. 7), from which it is quoted, and was adopted for dogmatic reasons by those like the Ebionites who denied the virgin birth, and those like the Gnostic sects who, holding docetic views, believed that the Christ entered into the man Jesus at the baptism. The words might, of course, be interpreted in an orthodox way, and were so taken, but there is no reason for thinking them original.

of the Psalms with the divine servant of Isaiah. "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my son." "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my beloved in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him."¹ If our analysis of the thoughts of Jesus is correct, it corresponds exactly with what was in His mind when He went forth on His mission. The conception of the divine son and the divine servant had formed the centre of His thoughts, the great lesson He had learned from Scripture. The experience of His baptism confirmed and strengthened the sense of His mission.

The baptism of Jesus was very early a subject of speculation. To all those who were frightened at the reality of our Lord's human nature it seemed to provide a means of escape from their difficulties. They fancied that the divine sonship had at this time come down and taken up its abode in Jesus; His being now hailed as son was a sign that the sonship had at this moment come; and the alteration in the words addressed to Him arose from this theory.² But on the other side there were difficulties felt which have left their mark on early apocryphal narratives.³ Why should it be

¹ Is. xlii. 1: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen (or beloved) in whom my soul delighteth." The quotation does not come from the LXX.

² Such, for example, was the teaching of Cerinthus (Iren., i., 21, ed. Harvey): Jesus was not born from a virgin, but was the son of Joseph and Mary, just like other men, but with greater righteousness, prudence, and wisdom. After His baptism the Christ descended on Him from that region which is above all in the form of a dove, and announced to Him the unknown Father; and at the end the Christ left Jesus, and Jesus suffered and rose again.

³ The Gospel of the Nazarenes gives the following story (Hieronymus *adv. Pelagianos* iii., 2, *Opp.*, ii., 782; Hilgenfeld, *Novum Testamentum extra canonem receptum*, iv., 15): Behold, the mother of the Lord and His brethren said to Him: John Baptist baptizes to the remission of sins; let us go and be baptized by him. He said to them: How have I sinned that I should go and be baptized by him? Unless, perchance, this very thing that I have said is ignorance. Jesus was compelled by his mother, Mary, almost unwillingly to receive the baptism of John (*De Rebaptismate*, 17). This is the account of the baptism in the Gospel according to the Hebrews (Gospel of the Nazarenes), Hilgenfeld, *loc. cit.* (*De Rebaptismate*, *loc. cit.*); Hieronymus *ad Ies.*, xi., 1 (*Opp.*, iv., 156): "When Jesus was baptized, fire was seen on the water. But it came to pass when the

necessary that He, the Son of God, who had done no sin, should be baptized, as other men who were sinners? Why should He prepare for the day of His own coming? If He were the Son of God, surely all this was derogatory to Him. It may be for these reasons that the objections of the Baptist were conceived, and later times put into his mouth the questions that they would have liked to ask themselves, but, as has been pointed out, the words might be entirely natural in the position in which they are recorded, and they have a uniqueness of expression which does not suggest a later date. If the Baptist knew the mind of Jesus—and why should he not have learnt it?—he would feel that it was more fitting that He should receive that baptism with the Spirit which he had foretold. And the answer of Jesus, adapting Himself to a complete human experience, harmonizes with all that we know of the thoughts of His life.

The narratives of the Gospels make it quite clear that His baptism was for Jesus a great spiritual crisis, that in such a way as never before He was conscious of His divine power and mission, that He felt, as not previously, that he was the Son of God, the servant summoned for God's work. The Baptism means the Temptation, and the beginning of His ministry. He knew for what He was called. There has been and is much discussion on the self-consciousness of Jesus. That is one of those subjects which must in any case remain beyond our comprehension and experience. We cannot analyze the manner in which the divine consciousness was united to the human. We have no experience or analogy to guide us. All that is possible for us is to narrate faithfully the account that comes to us—directly or indirectly from His own lips—of Himself, and build up our conception as we proceed. This is certain, that the baptism

Lord had ascended from the water there descended the whole fountain of the Holy Spirit (*fons omnis spiritus sancti*) and rested upon Him and said to Him: 'My Son, in all the prophets I was expecting Thee, that Thou shouldst come, and I should rest in Thee. For Thou art my rest, Thou art my first-begotten Son, who reignest for ever.'" That these are later reconstructions, and inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, must be apparent to any reader.

is represented as a unique crisis in the life of Jesus, and henceforth He knows His mission.

It has been pointed out that the fourth Gospel does not give any account of the baptism, but only refers to it, and that in it the baptism of John (who is never called the Baptist) is entirely subordinated to his witness. The allusive manner in which the actual baptism is referred to is entirely in accordance with the method of the Gospel, which does not trouble to narrate what is known and emphasizes what has been in the opinion of the author passed over and misunderstood; but the question is raised: Is St. John correct in suggesting a very much closer union between Jesus and John than is described in the other Gospels, and in particular in asserting that John definitely bore witness to the mission of Jesus?

Most definitely is the very remarkable testimony contained in the words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," questioned. It is held to be an anachronism, and to represent the manner in which the fourth Gospel reads into an earlier period the language of a later time. It is possible that some reflection may make us hesitate to accept that criticism. It has been suggested more than once already that the language, the thoughts and ideas of John, as of Jesus, are derived from a fresh and intimate study of the prophets, and that Jesus from the beginning of His ministry thought of Himself as the servant of the Lord and applied to Himself these passages. But in the imagery of the prophet the figure of the lamb had been used of the servant.¹ On the servant was laid the iniquity of us all, and he bare the sins of many. There is nothing in the words put into the Baptist's mouth which he might not have learnt from the book of Isaiah, and applied to Him Who already felt Himself to be "the Servant" with all that it implied. It is remarkable also that this conception of the "Lamb of God" is not as universal or as constant as we expect. It occurs but little outside the Apocalypse, and it is as likely that the language of the Baptist represented the origin of the image as that it was derived from later thought.

¹ Is. liii. 7, 11, 12.

There is a definite tradition of close intercourse between John and Jesus. Jesus knows at once of the death of John. He speaks of him often. He praises him highly. It is not probable that the Gospel narrative would have begun with the baptism of John if he had not been associated most intimately with the work of Jesus. Why, too, should we be told in St. Mark that it was after the imprisonment of John that Jesus went from Judaea into Galilee? Again, according to the fourth Gospel, some of our Lord's disciples had previously been disciples of John, and this seems corroborated by other traditions. The qualifications of an apostle, as stated at the time of the election of Matthias, were that he was a witness of the life of Jesus, beginning with the baptism of John. These words, if pressed, would mean that all the apostles had been at any rate hearers of John. It may be taken certainly to imply that the work of the two was looked upon as continuous, and that some at least of our Lord's disciples had been hearers of the Baptist.

For a time, the length of which we are unable to estimate, Jesus, in the eyes of the world, was a disciple of John. He collected disciples round Him, and His activities for the most part were placed in the Jordan valley and perhaps elsewhere in Judaea. It was natural that such a position might seem to imply rivalry, and some rivalry grew up among John's disciples, who were jealous for their master and unable to appreciate his profounder insight. There was a discussion, we are told, between John's disciples and a Jew about purifying. Presumably they held that their master's washing, once performed, was sufficient, and that there was no need for the elaborate purifications of the law. This led to an altercation, and, as a result, the disciples of St. John were told that their cause was a failing one, and that it was Jesus who was now making disciples. "He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." The answer of the Baptist is in style and matter alike characteristic. It is given with the richness of figurative language which he had learnt from the prophets; it reveals the greatness of his spiritual character. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom who

standeth and heareth him rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." Isaiah had spoken of the joy of her sons in Jerusalem as the joy of the bridegroom over the bride.¹ In a similar strain John pictures himself as the friend rejoicing in the presence of the bridegroom. He exhibited no petty jealousy, as was expected, but saw in Jesus the fulfilment of all his visions.²

One more note of this time is given on which it is worth pausing, although it may not be quite possible to estimate its significance. Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples did. Then He refused to be considered a rival, and retired with His disciples into Galilee.

Our information is too slight, and the chronological arrangement of our material is too uncertain to enable us to estimate the real character of this early period of ministry. It seems to represent a time when Jesus worked in harmony with or even in subservience to John. And only gradually did His deeper spiritual message become clear. His teaching would be much like that of John. The full character of His mission was not revealed. Yet many would look back on these early days in the Jordan valley as a period of hope and expectation. They felt that more was to come. They were eager and excited. The note of sorrow had not yet been heard.³

¹ Is. lxii. 5.

² It must be noticed that the passage (Jn. iii. 31-36) clearly does not come from the Baptist, but contains the Evangelist's own comment on the incident that we have just quoted. While the preceding words are such as the Baptist might have used, and harmonize with his style, the verses that follow are as clearly in the style, and express the theology, of the Evangelist. A similar judgment must be passed on vv. 16-21 of the same chapter. These instances show us that the Evangelist is in the habit of passing from the words or incidents he records to his own comment without noting the transition, and that consideration must be our guide in studying the Gospel.

³ I do not feel able to see my way clearly through the stories at the beginning of St. John's Gospel. It is quite possible to hold that that Gospel contains much good tradition without considering its chronological order in all cases correct. It was natural that the discourse of Nicodemus, whether historical or not, should be put in

III

For how long John preached we have no knowledge. Some would extend his ministry over several years, others would confine it within very narrow limits. On that point we must be content to remain ignorant. It must be remarked, however, that popular religious movements develop very rapidly in the East, and that it was not a characteristic of members of the Herodian family to allow any movement likely to be injurious to their authority to become formidable if it could be checked in time. It is probable that the attitude of the authorities in Jerusalem had been for some time threatening, and that John had tended more and more to find refuge in the territory of Herod Antipas. The latter had pleasure, we are told, in listening to John.¹ He would be anxious to be popular with the people and might even have wished to constitute himself a sort of patron of the prophet. But any possibility of this was taken away by the course of events. The adulterous and incestuous connection between Antipas and Herodias became known and John was stern in his condemnation. As Elijah had stood up to Ahab and Jezebel, so he stood up before kings and was not ashamed. He was the prophet of righteousness, and his message was as much for kings as for people. "It is not lawful for thee to have her."

It is needless to say that the fury and resentment of Herodias was directed against him, and that Herod also became his enemy. Josephus gives as a cause of the event that followed that he feared the influence that John exercised over the people.² No doubt this was true, and there is nothing in this inconsistent with the more special reason for action which the Evangelists give. When Herodias' anger

close connection with the baptism on which it is a comment. It is possible also to believe that the Gospel preserves the tradition of St. John, and even was written by him, without considering that his memory was always accurate, or that he always told the story in chronological order. I hesitate, for example, to accept the Johannine date for the Cleansing of the Temple.

¹ Mk. vi. 20.

² Josephus, *Antt.*, xviii., § 118.

was aroused it would transform Herod's hesitating fears into action. He therefore arrested him. He did not wish to put him to death, but confined him in the fortress of Machaerus, situated among the mountains in the southern confines of his kingdom.

The result of this would, of course, be to break up and disperse the whole body of John's disciples, except some who attended their master, and to put an end to the movement. Jesus returned to Galilee¹ and His disciples to their own homes. But although the movement apparently came to an end the arrest of the Baptist was, as is so often in such circumstances the case, the cause or the occasion of its real end being fulfilled. So far Jesus had taught, in appearance at any rate, under the shadow of the Baptist. Henceforth He assumes His own office and ministry. The direct result of the imprisonment of the Baptist is the Galilaean ministry.

One more incident is narrated of John's life. While he was in prison he heard of the work that Jesus did, and in a spirit of hope, of uncertainty, of expectation, perhaps of some disappointment, he sent disciples to ask Him directly whether He was the Christ. "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?"² Jesus' answer is significant. In the first place, we shall notice that it is expressed in language which would be full of meaning to John, which would remind him alike of his own mission and of that insight that he had had into the mind of Jesus. It has been pointed out how much of the recorded sayings and teaching of the Baptist has been drawn from the language of the prophets, and especially from the great prophecy

¹ Mc. i. 14. It must be emphasized that the reason given for Jesus' departure to Galilee and beginning to preach on his own behalf—the fact that John had been cast into prison—is evidence for the connection of Jesus with John previously. It seems to support the Johannine account of a period of discipleship.

² There is apparently no parallel in contemporary Jewish literature for the phrase, "he that should come," or "the coming one"—ὁ ἐρχόμενος. It is, then, a term created by John, and, as usual, out of Old Testament expressions. That the day "cometh," or the Lord "cometh," is almost a technical phrase, and the transition to "he that cometh" is easy. So, Is. xl. 10, Behold the Lord God cometh as a mighty one—*ἰδοὺ κύριος Κύριος μετὰ ἰσχύος ἔρχεται*.

which concludes the book of Isaiah. This Jesus now uses. He appeals to his works: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard. The works of the servant of the Lord have been accomplished. To the poor the Gospel is preached, the dead are raised, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear," and he adds words which have been taken as a rebuke, but may be a commendation: "Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me."¹

Much difficulty has been found with this event as inconsistent with the testimony that the Baptist had already given. It may be suggested rather that it entirely harmonizes with it. Had, indeed, the Baptist had what some people would have us believe, a direct message informing him that the Christ had come—a theory neither demanded by the narrative, nor consistent with anything that we know of the methods of Divine revelation—it would be so. But if God's Spirit, working through his natural powers, had taught him through the Old Testament Scriptures of the coming and the character of the Christ, if he had seen in Jesus of Nazareth, whom he baptized, that spiritual power which made him feel that here was "the coming one," whom he greeted as "the Lamb of God," it was natural, when the ministry of Galilee began, that his hopes would be raised, that he would feel his intuitions

¹ An admirable instance of the methods of modern criticism may be studied in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, ii., 2501. St. Matthew tells us that the message of the Baptist to Jesus was sent when John was in prison. Dr. Cheyne does not accept this. At once the question arises, Why did not John come himself? So a reason has to be found in the urgency of his work. But why should we prefer a nineteenth-century conjecture to the evidence of a contemporary? It is a characteristic of certain modern criticism that it never accepts any statement in original documents if it can avoid doing so, and prefers to reconstruct the history in a purely conjectural manner. The question has been asked: Would John in prison have the freedom and the opportunity to be able to know about Jesus, to have intercourse with his disciples, and to send a message? The answer is, Certainly, under the normal conditions of Oriental confinement. It would mean little more than the restraint of liberty. The Eastern prison does not generally mean solitary confinement or seclusion as we conceive it.

justified, his expectations fulfilled, and should send his disciples to ask the definite question, Was he the long expected Messiah?

How long John was kept in prison we have no certain information. The end was a grim tragedy. Herod celebrated a great birthday feast, and Salome, the daughter of Herodias by her first husband, afterwards the wife of Philip the Tetrarch, danced before him and gave him great pleasure. He promised her whatsoever she should ask, and, prompted by her mother, she demanded the head of John the Baptist. Herod was grieved; but he had promised, he had promised publicly, and he kept his word. He sent and beheaded John in prison, and Herodias had her desire. But the whole Jewish people condemned the murder, and when, not long afterwards, Herod's army suffered a severe defeat at the hands of Aretas, it was looked upon as the divine vengeance for the crime.

John died, and the movement he had originated lost its vitality. He had indeed collected a body of disciples round him. Under his influence they had lived a religious life. He had taught them to pray; they had their rules of fasting, which they fulfilled; they continued to baptize. Like other small sects they kept together, and we find traces of their influence two generations later in remote parts of the world. More than that, in the strange religious atmosphere of the East, we hear of new sects which honoured his name and claimed to preserve his teaching and rites. But all these are but the curiosities and by-ways of religion. They grew up in the deserts of Judaea, in Syria, in Mesopotamia, and gave, no doubt, some strange religious satisfaction to the little coteries which were formed, but they exercised no influence on the great current of the world's life, and the true succession of John's teaching was otherwise preserved.

John died, but the hope in which he lived was not disappointed. The mission which he had undertaken had been accomplished. The Messiah of whom he was the forerunner had come. Initiated by him, inspired by his teaching, using his language and his rites, starting from that great appeal to the primal fact of a righteous

life, that withdrawal of religion from the fantasies and crudities and narrowness in which it had been involved, a great movement had been started which, honouring him in all his sternness and austerity as its forerunner, but bearing the more sweet and blessed name of that neophyte whom he had greeted as the Lamb of God, had swept forward into the great world, had attacked the citadel where evil seemed to be enthroned, had conquered pagan civilization, had transformed it with a new life, and raised the mighty fabric of the Christian Church.

IV

What are we to say of John the Baptist ?

I may be allowed, I think, to dismiss uninvestigated the various theories which look upon him as a mythical person and explain the story of the baptism of our Lord as an astral event.¹ We cannot afford to spend time over such learned trifling. Let us recognize fundamentally that we are dealing with a great movement which started in Palestine in the preaching of John, and spread thence throughout the world, that the herald and first preacher of the kingdom was a man of virile character, of stern morality and deep piety, whose lineaments can be discerned very clearly in the fragmentary but vivid records which

¹ Here is an instance taken from *The Christ Myth* of Professor Drews, p. 122: "Under the name John, which in Hebrew means 'pleasing to God,' is concealed the Babylonian water-god, Oannes (Ea). Baptism is connected with this worship, and the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan represents the reflection upon earth of what originally took place among the stars. That is to say, the sun begins its yearly course with a baptism, entering as it does immediately after its birth the constellation of the water-carrier (Aquarius), and the fishes (Pisces). But this celestial water-kingdom, in which each year the day-star (sun) is purified and born again, is the Eridanus, the heavenly Jordan, or Year-stream (Egyptian, *iaro* or *iero*, the river), wherein the original baptism of the Divine Saviour of the world took place." It is obviously possible to write like this to an unlimited extent, for such speculation is not controlled by reason or evidence or probability. An examination of this and similar theories may be found in Thorburn, *The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels*, p. 118.

have been preserved to us, and that the great movements of the world are not created by fantastic fables. Our history deals with reality and a creation as real as the Christian Church must have been created by founders who were real and had the spiritual power to accomplish their task.

We may dismiss again many of the critical objections which have been raised to details of the narrative. It may be, indeed, that this or that story is not correctly given, and the fact of discrepancies between the different accounts shows that we are not to expect an accuracy here which we never find in secular history, and that it is necessary for us, as for other investigators, to balance one version of a narrative against another in order to discover the real sequence of events. But there is no reason for thinking that information could not be preserved, or that it did not exist. There is a tendency in modern times to underrate the literary activity and the intelligence of periods when the conditions of life were in many ways so unlike our own. It must be remembered that the great body of the Jews were able to read and write, that the study and knowledge of the Scriptures was widely diffused, and that there was a considerable popular literature. Moreover, the memory of the student was carefully trained, and a great body of oral tradition was preserved in that way. The retirement of John in the desert would not mean an illiterate life. He would read and reread the rolls of Scripture, and ponder over the passages imprinted on his memory. When a body of disciples gathered round him they would listen to his words, they would con them as did the students in the schools of the Rabbis, as do those in the mosque of El Azhar in Egypt at the present day. His vivid, picturesque language would impress itself on their minds. Some might write them down, and a record of his teaching, preserving words that had touched the imagination and giving incidents that had been remembered, but destitute of chronological order and of the details demanded by academic histories, would quickly come into being. Books were not long, but a vivid, popular intelligence would preserve a picture accurate in all points that mattered in short words. A truthful history would be created.

And the narrative bears all the marks of truth. The message throughout is consistent. It is emphatically the message of the prophet. It is a simple message, it is like that of Jesus; but it is without that profound religious insight that He exhibited. Its contents were such as might be learned from the prophets by one who could penetrate to their spirit. It is expressed in a style which is markedly John's own, a style also which, like the thoughts, is derived directly from the study of the prophets. They exhibit few or no signs of having been coloured by later thought. The language and thought of John are simple, direct, personal, but they differ from the simplicity and reality of Jesus.

We may accept, then, the narrative as we can construct it from our different authorities as giving a history truthful in all that matters, and investigate the origin and character of the Baptist's teaching as it has been depicted to us.

It is not unreasonable to seek this in some kind of relationship with a community like that of the Essenes. They dwelt, we know, in the same place that tradition assigns to his novitiate, the wilderness of Judaea. Like him they were ascetics in their life, pure in their morals, fervent in their religion. Like him they laid great stress on a ceremonial washing which, with them, was constantly repeated. It seems not unnatural to find here the direct source of his message. But a more careful enquiry will reveal to us differences which are perhaps less obvious, but are, for all that, most profound. The Essene had no thought of a life except one which was lived apart from the world. He had no gospel to give except for those who retired from the business, the pleasures, and the temptations of life. But John's message was for those who lived in the world. The Essene would have bidden the soldier shun a profession which implied the destruction of life and was accompanied by so much evil, but John contemplates him continuing in his calling, and only bids him act justly and avoid outrage and cruelty. The Essene would have told the tax-gatherer that the wealth with which he was always busied was evil, and that the public society which was supported by the taxes which he collected was the kingdom of the Evil One, and that he must shun all worldly combinations if he would

live the life God had ordered for him. But John was satisfied with bidding him practise his calling justly and avoid extortion. The gospel of John was for men living in the world, the gospel of the Essene was for the recluse, the ascetic, and the eccentric. Nor was the analogy with John's baptism more than superficial. The Essene surrounded his life with a multitude of minute observances. He was never tired of creating prohibitions. He was concerned with a great number of unimportant trivialities. He was scrupulous and pedantic and tiresome. But John spoke of judgment, and repentance, and a clean heart, and his baptism was but the symbol of that change. Between the strong, stern prophet, with a clear message for the world, and the white-robed Essene, surrounding himself with a mass of formalities, thinking of his clothes and his food and every triviality of life, troubling himself about so many things that did not really matter at all, and with no possible gospel for the world, what real analogy was there?

There were other sects that arose now or at a later date with similar tendencies whose names are recounted in the obscure and confused pages of Epiphanius. Some of these, such as the Hemerobaptists, no doubt also laid stress on washings and baptism. The existence of these sects is undoubted evidence of the religious activity and interest of the times, but most of them were the result rather than the inspiration of John's teaching, and not only is our knowledge of them imperfect, but there is a complete absence of any evidence of connection, and we cannot build up history on conjectures unsupported by any testimony.

But this much may be conceded on the relation of John's baptism to other movements of the time. While it is true, as we believe, that it was directly from the prophets that he drew his conception of baptism as characteristic of the Messianic times, it is also true that we are guided always by our environment in what we can see in the Scriptures and learn from them. We read them in accordance with the circumstances of the day, and learn from them the lesson needed for the times. The fact that baptisms in some form or other were so much in the mind of teachers

of religion would inevitably turn John's mind in his researches, however unconsciously it might be, to the references he might find to it in the Scriptures. We may put it somewhat deeper: The life of the times and the exceeding sinfulness of men (as people held) made earnest people ask how all this sin might be washed away from the world. A cleansing seemed to be the need of the times, and custom, tradition, symbolism, turned their thoughts to the cleansing purity of water. John, as others, desired a cleansing, and he turned to the prophet and read of a sprinkling with water and a change of heart and the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit and the purifying fire of God, and he preached a baptism of repentance, and bid men change their heart, and looked forward earnestly to the pouring forth of the Spirit and the fire which would cleanse the good and destroy the evil.

A similar judgment may be passed on the apocalyptic interpretation of the Baptist's preaching.¹ It is obviously true that he has eschatological conceptions. He looks forward to judgment, and bids men prepare for it; he expects the Messiah who is to come. It is true, also, that there was much eschatological expectation in the air, and all men are influenced by their environment. But the inspiration of John was drawn directly from the prophets of the Old Testament, and not from the fantastic imaginings of the Book of Enoch. It was natural enough that when so many dreams and visions of the future filled people's minds, and men were seeking for some alleviation to the miseries of the times in these visions of vengeance and glory, that

¹ The apocalyptic interpretation of John Baptist's life is insisted on by Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, E.T., see especially p. 366: "Historically regarded, the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul are simply the culminating manifestations of Jewish apocalyptic thought." P. 368: "The Baptist and Jesus are not, therefore, borne upon the current of a general eschatological movement. The period offers no event calculated to give an impulse to eschatological enthusiasm. They themselves set the times in motion by acting, by creating eschatological facts." P. 377: "The baptism of John was therefore an eschatological sacrament, pointing forward to the pouring forth of the spirit, and to the judgment, a provision for 'salvation.'" And much of the same sort.

John, poring over the Old Testament, should seek there its message for the future. But the fundamental point is that his message is prophetic and not apocalyptic. Its essence lay, not in looking for or in revealing strange mysteries, but rather in the renewed conception of the righteousness of God, and in the preparation for the judgment, the kingdom, and the Messiah, by leading a righteous life and the cleansing from sin. John's message is profoundly ethical.

We shall continually, in the course of our investigation, be confronted by the introduction of apocalyptic and eschatological interpretations, and we may rightly express our obligations to those scholars who have emphasized this element in the religious thought of the time and its influence on the teaching of our Lord. It is, however, a cause of failure in many scholars that, instead of following their texts, they allow themselves to be overpowered by some mastering idea, and then pour the history into that mould. This is true in a marked manner of the modern eschatological interpretation. It has given a meaning to much which was obscure, and illuminated the whole period. But it is only one current of thought, and the first duty of any investigator of difficult historical problems must be to hold any theory or hypothesis or explanation with the question ever present subconsciously in his mind, whether such theory is true or applicable to the particular circumstances. Many strands of varied colour are woven together into the Gospel narrative, and we do not explain it by allowing ourselves to see only one colour. Imperfect generalizations must not dominate our history.

If we turn from the region of modern conjecture to the more sober records of history, we shall find an answer to our questions easier. The teaching of our Lord on the ministry of John was as clear and explicit as it was authoritative. John was, above all, a prophet. So the people had always believed. "All men counted John as a prophet." So tradition definitely asserted. "He shall be called the prophet of the Most Highest." He was more than that, he was the greatest of the prophets. In his strength and austerity he is contrasted with the reed shaken

by the wind or the courtier clothed in soft raiment. There was none greater among those born of women.

John was Elijah too. So our Lord had taught. He was the messenger who had been predicted: "Behold, I send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me." After the vision of the Transfiguration there was discussion among the disciples. They were pondering over the question whether Jesus was the Messiah, and wondering whether all the signs of His coming had been fulfilled. One of the signs, so the scribes said, was that Elijah must first come. Our Lord assented. Elijah was to come and restore all things. He had come, but he had had to suffer as the Son of man, too, must suffer. "If ye are ready to receive it, this is that Elijah which was to come."

Much discussion has arisen as to the reason which caused John to deny that he was Elijah.¹ It seems a hazardous suggestion to offer, that the reason that he did so was the fact that he knew that in no real sense of the word was he Elijah. He knew—for God had spoken to him—that the day was at hand, he knew that it was his function to prepare for it, and that the preparation was the message of righteousness; but no conviction or voice told him that he was Elijah, so he said only what he felt and described his consciousness of his mission in language drawn from the prophet. It was quite another matter that Christian tradition should look upon him as having come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and that our Lord, conscious of his Messianic office, should be able to explain that the Messianic signs were all fulfilled, for Elijah had come—John was Elijah.

There is one more aspect of John's life which must be emphasized. It has been remarked that the fourth Gospel lays little stress on his preaching or his baptism. These are merely referred to, although in a manner which shows that the writer knew of them, and instead the whole emphasis is laid on the work of the forerunner as one who

¹ It is interesting to notice that this denial occurs only in the fourth Gospel, and that those critics who leap at the statement, as it seems to make a difficulty, resolutely refuse to accept the unsupported testimony of that Gospel in other cases where it provides no material for fault-finding.

witnessed to Christ. Great emphasis is laid on the importance of this witness. Not only is the testimony on at least two occasions recorded, but there are references to it at other places in the narrative: "Ye have sent unto John and he hath borne witness unto the truth, but the witness that I have is greater than that of John." And we are told of the people where John first baptized, how they said, "John did no miracle, but all things whatsoever John spake of this man are true." Now the whole of this aspect of John's ministry has been doubted; it has been maintained that it is an anachronism, and that John really never knew anything of Jesus until he heard of Jesus preaching while he was in prison. If that were the case it would be difficult to know why the story should have been developed, and such emphasis laid upon it. It is true that disciples of John remained, and that even in Asia there were those who knew only of the baptism of John, but it is difficult to believe that they were of sufficient importance to have made it necessary to forge a whole string of incidents and discourses to prove this relation of Jesus and John.

It is indeed a hazardous conjecture, but it may be suggested that it is possible that the reason of this conception of John's mission is that it was a true one. The story tells us that an unnamed disciple of John had been induced by the master's testimony to attach himself to Jesus, and tradition has held that that disciple was the author of the Gospel, or at any rate the recorder of the traditions contained in the Gospel. It was clear that he had learnt about Jesus from the witness of John, and that to him the witness was of great importance, so naturally he records it and emphasizes it. The hypothesis is a simple one, is it therefore untrue? Or is it not possible that when the natural interpretation of a record harmonizes with common sense it may be more likely to be true than wrong-headed learning? It was the testimony of John that first sent the disciple to Jesus, and the disciple had never since doubted the value to himself of that testimony.¹

¹ It may be convenient to put together the reasons for considering that the connection of our Lord with John Baptist was closer than would be gathered at first sight from the Synoptic

It is difficult for us to realize what feelings amongst the religious-minded Israelites must have been aroused by the knowledge that a prophet had once more risen in Israel.¹ The consciousness that for so many centuries God had not spoken to Israel through a prophet was keenly felt. The canon of the prophetic books had been closed. There was no more open vision. It is significant how at the very moment of the Maccabean triumph, when Jerusalem had been recovered and the temple was being purified, the stones of the polluted altar were laid aside "until there should come a prophet to give an answer concerning them"; and when Simon is formally accepted as leader and high priest, it is stated that it is done "until there should arise a faithful prophet."² Neither the subtleties of the scribes nor the fantasies of the apocalyptic writers satisfied the spiritual sense of the people. Now at last a prophet had arisen. The people had heard him and accepted him; the publicans and harlots had repented of their sins; but the scribes and Pharisees did not believe him. He had created so great an impression that when Jesus began to preach there were many who thought that John the Baptist had

Gospels. (1) The language of our Lord about the Baptist implies close intimacy. (2) The fact that all the Gospels place the work of the Baptist at the beginning of their narrative of Jesus' preaching implies that it was thought that there was a real connection between the two movements. (3) The qualification of an apostle is described as being a witness from the preaching of John. This suggests that some or most of the disciples had been at least hearers of John. (4) The statement that Jesus returned to Galilee after the Baptist was imprisoned means that up to that time he had been associated with him. (5) If the tradition of St. John be accepted the whole story is much more coherent and self-consistent.

¹ The significance of the revival of the prophetic office is admirably expressed by the author of *Ecce Homo*, pp. 2, 3: "It was the glory of John the Baptist to have successfully revived the function of a prophet. For several centuries the function had remained in abeyance. . . . When John the Baptist appeared, not the oldest man in Palestine could remember to have spoken in his earliest childhood with any man who had seen a prophet. . . . In these circumstances it was an occurrence of the first magnitude, more important far than war or revolution, when a new prophet actually appeared."

² 1 Macc. iv. 46, xiv. 41.

arisen from the dead. The feeling which has so often prevailed that some great hero or popular saint could not really have died and would appear again showed itself in his case. As Arthur waits with all his court under Cadbury Hill, as the Pyrenees will once more echo to the trumpets of Charlemagne and his Paladins, as Elias was to come again, so John had again appeared on earth.

The statement that John was a prophet reveals to us the real significance of his ministry. He came in the way of righteousness. It is significant how much stress is laid in the story of his birth on this conception. His parents were righteous before God. He will teach the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just. Israel in the days of the Messiah is to serve in holiness and righteousness before God, They are to walk in the way of peace. Peace towards God, righteousness among men, is the note of prophecy. The extreme eschatological interpretation has no support in our texts. The expectation of judgment and a speedy end of this order of things did not mean that a righteous life in the world was of quite subordinate interest. It meant that it was of supreme importance. The preaching of John meant in fact the restoration of the true genius of Israel, of that aim which had been the richest possession of the chosen people since they first learnt that Jehovah was a god unlike those of the surrounding nations. It was for this they had fought and suffered against the assaults of Syrian nature worship; it was this that had been their strength in the days of the captivity and had been the guiding principle in the restoration of the theocratic state; it was for this that under the Maccabees they had resisted the cruel attacks of Hellenism, and now in the last days of the Jewish nation, before Judaism had attained its consummation the message of righteousness is heard with the clear, ringing voice of the last prophet.

So, said Jesus, the days of John Baptist are the end of an old order of things and the beginning of a new. From Moses to John had been the epoch of the law and the prophets. Their work was accomplished; their reign was over. With John had come the first dawn of the kingdom of God—a new and higher condition of life—the least who

has heard and accepted the message of the kingdom is greater than John.

The message of John, then, was the preparation for the Messianic Age by the restoration of the simple but profound Jewish conception of religion as righteousness in the sight of God. Many of the Jewish people had fallen away and learnt to copy the evil life of the heathen, many others followed an imperfect way of religion. They learnt to rely on the temple and the cult and all the privileges of the nation, or they had substituted an unreal and ecclesiastical system consisting in the scrupulous performance of a ceremonial morality for the justice and holiness which the prophets had taught, or they had been attracted by fanciful ways of life or systems of thought. John comes, and with clearness, simplicity, and conviction recalls them to the true way of Israel's religion. It was the highest revelation of life which had yet been given to man; it was the necessary preparation for the higher revelation which was to come. It was the condition of preaching the Gospel.

For the religion of Israel, great and holy as it was, and essential as it was in preparation for the religion of Christ, had the defect of all systems of simple morality. It had no universal attractiveness, it burned with no hidden fire, it saw no vision. The Jewish people had been dispersed throughout the world, and their manner of life had attracted much curiosity, and philosophers had enquired into it, and some few had accepted its message, but it had shown no power to warm the heart or to illuminate the understanding or fire the spirit. It was the preparation, the necessary preparation, for the true revelation of religion, but it was not religion. That was why the prophet looked forward to the baptism of the Spirit and of fire, and why Jesus had said that he that was least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John. For the kingdom of heaven had come, and from his days the violent had rent it. A powerful solvent had come into the world. A message of mercy and love, but a message which would often bring not peace but a sword. A message which would discriminate good from evil. which would rouse up violent passions that

would be too strong for it, and might rend it asunder. It is the revelation of religion that we have next to study.¹

¹ It is in this that the author of *Ecce Homo* finds the significance of Christ's teaching, p. 8: "The phrase 'baptize with fire' seems at first sight to contain a mixture of metaphors. Baptism means cleansing, and fire means warmth. How can warmth cleanse? The answer is that moral warmth does cleanse. No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic. And such an enthusiastic virtue Christ was to introduce."

CHAPTER IV

THE GALILAEAN MINISTRY

"JEHOVAH," said the Rabbis, "hath created seven seas, but the sea of Gennesaret is His delight." The Lake of Galilee, of Tiberias, of Gennesaret, for by all these names was it known, is situated in the Upper Jordan valley about thirty miles from its source at Caesarea Philippi and seventy from the Dead Sea.¹ It is about thirteen miles long from north to south and seven broad, and lies nearly 700 feet below the level of the sea. It is surrounded by high ground rising some 2,000 feet above its surface; on the east by steep limestone cliffs, the edge of the platform of the Hauran; on the west by hills more rounded in form and less precipitous. A narrow strip of level ground, broadening in places into small plains, intervenes between the hills and the lake, and north and south the Jordan has created wide alluvial expanses. Seen from the south its main features are the deep blue of the water, often dancing in the wind and sunshine, the dark, bare, sombre mountains that surround it, and the great white peak of Hermon dominating the landscape.

At the present day it presents a prospect of almost complete desolation. Though its waters abound in fish, no sail appears upon its surface, and though its shores are rich and fertile, but little is reaped from them. One solitary decayed town, marking the site of Tiberias, alone remains. But in the days of our Lord it was the centre of a large population. Its fish were exported over the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean, and the fishing industry employed great fleets of boats. It was famous for its rich fruits, for its corn and wine and oil. Nine populous towns, many of

¹ On the Lake of Galilee see George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of Palestine*, pp. 437-463.

them with names made known throughout the world by the Gospel narrative, were situated on its shores.

Where the waters of Jordan left the lake, on its western side stood Taricheae,¹ that gave its name to a salt fish, the great industry of the lake. It was a populous city; when it was taken by Vespasian the able-bodied captives numbered over 30,000. Some five and a half miles north on its western side lay Tiberias,² newly built by Herod Antipas, and named in honour of the Emperor, with its great citadel and palace dominating the town, its market-place and synagogue on the lower ground, and some two miles to the south its famous hot springs. At first shunned by stricter Jews for its heathen associations and the accusation of impurity, in later days, after the destruction of Jerusalem, it became the seat of the Rabbinical Schools and the home of strict Judaism. Three miles further on came Magdala, and then the plain of Gennesaret, with Capernaum and its copious springs at the northern end. Chorazin was on the slope of the hills to the north, and on the east bank of the Jordan, where it flowed into the lake, stood Bethsaida Julias,³ the city which Philip had built in honour of Julia, daughter of Augustus. Beyond was another small grass-grown plain.

On the east side the Jordan, shortly after leaving the lake, is joined by the Yarmuk, and the junction of the two rivers has created a wide fertile plain, on the high cliffs above which stood the Greek city Gadara. Its temples, its amphitheatre, and its villas dominating the landscape might be seen far up the lake, and were visible evidence of Hellenic life. Further north, on the same side, were Gamala and Hippos; the former rising in great terraces on both sides of the mountain, the latter crowning the height with its temples.⁴ It is a point of some importance that while the western side of the lake was included in the territory of

¹ On Taricheae see Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 451 ff., who gives ample references.

² Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 447 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 457-8. There seems to be no reason for requiring two places of this name (see Chapter VII., p. 273).

⁴ On these three towns see Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 459; on Gamala, Schürer, *Geschichte*, i., 615, 616; on Hippos, *ibid.*, ii., 155; on Gadara, ii., 157.

Herod Antipas, and was therefore Jewish, the eastern side was partly in the territory of Philip, partly in that of Greek cities of the Decapolis.

It is certainly remarkable that the same Sea of Gennesaret, which is of such surpassing interest to us as the centre of our Lord's ministry, should in little more than thirty years have been conspicuous in the great war as the residence of the historian Josephus when governor of Galilee, and that therefore our knowledge of it should be considerable. It is his description which makes us realize what the country was like in the days of its prosperity, before the terrible blight of Mohammedan and Turkish rule had fallen upon it. He dwells on the rich fertility of the district, the purity of the waters of the lake, and its great supplies of fish. He depicts for us its crowded life, when it was the great centre of Jewish patriotism, its strong and well-built cities, its great fleet of ships, so large that they could be used in war, the turbulence and craft of its people. Now all has passed away, and as we gaze upon its beautiful landscape, we wonder whether the great events of our own day will mean for it some measure of good government and restored prosperity.

In this famous land the most fertile spot was the plain of Gennesaret. Thus Josephus describes it:¹ "Along the shores of Gennesaret there runs a district of the same name, of wonderful fertility and beauty. There is no manner of trees that it does not produce, such is its fertility, and the inhabitants have planted every kind. The air, too, is so well tempered as to suit all alike. Walnuts, the most hardy of trees, flourish there in vast numbers, as also do palms, which demand a hot climate, and hard by these you may see figs and olives which demand a more temperate climate. One might call it the ambition of nature, forcing things that contend each with the other to come together in one place. It is a goodly strife of the seasons, each in its turn claiming the country for itself. For indeed it not only produces in a marvellous way the different fruits, but it preserves them. It supplies continually for ten months the most royal fruits, the fig and the grape, and all others

¹ Josephus, *B.J.*, iii., § 506-521, and other places.

throughout the year as they become ripe. In addition to the beauty of the climate it is watered by a most prolific spring, called Capharnaum by its inhabitants."

It was at the northern end of this plain just where its warm springs ran into the sea that Capernaum, the central spot of the ministry of our Lord, was situated.¹ His life and teaching were perhaps independent of the accident of place, but we may notice that the warm and pleasant climate, the bountiful supply of food, and the easy life would create just the conditions under which such a ministry could be carried on, and that from the simple and independent fishermen of the lake were chosen the most faithful of His followers, men who in after-life in such different surroundings testified to what they had learnt by the Sea of Galilee and sealed their testimony with their death.

I

It was to Capernaum that Jesus came after the imprisonment of John had broken up the body of disciples that surrounded him. The motive that led Him to that place must be a matter of conjecture. It has been thought that it had become the home of His mother and brothers, but for that there is no evidence; in fact, the narrative makes it quite clear that He was living apart from them. It is more probable that it was because there He would find those whom He wished to make His disciples. There is considerable probability that the sons of Zebedee were His cousins; it is even more probable that all the first four disciples had been with Jesus Himself disciples of the Baptist, that under these circumstances they had become attached to Him, that He thus knew them, and thought of them when the time had come for His own independent

¹ The site of Capernaum has long been the subject of controversy. The two rival sites are Khan Minyeh on the northern edge of Genesaret, and Tell Hum, about two miles further north. See Smith, p. 456; Sanday, *Sacred Sites of the Gospels* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903), pp. 36-45. The literature on the subject is large. My own belief is that it was a straggling, unwallled town or village which extended over both sites.

ministry to begin.¹ Some such circumstances would best explain all the facts. The action of our Lord was purposeful. The times were fulfilled. The new work must begin. The purpose must be accomplished. To carry it out, He begins by summoning those who were to be His first disciples.

So Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee and saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting their nets into the sea, and He said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."² It is needless to suppose that events happened as abruptly as the narrative might imply. It is the characteristic of the short, pregnant language of St. Mark that it concentrates attention on the essential point, and gives just that striking sentence which would inevitably fix itself indelibly on the memory of those who heard it. St. Luke gives a fuller story, which had probably come to him by tradition.³ But it is in the words recorded by both that the true significance of the event lies. Jesus summoned them to Him as a religious teacher, with the intention of preaching a Gospel to mankind. He already thought of Himself as a Shepherd of Souls. He came to convert and to save. It is sometimes maintained now that Jesus had no conception of His true mission, that He had no purpose to preach a Gospel, or to gather a Church. Such a theory is not, on other grounds, tenable and is quite inconsistent with these words. As Jesus drew all men unto Him, so Peter and those others whom He summoned to be His disciples were henceforth to catch men.

Jesus passes on and summons likewise the two sons of Zebedee.⁴ All these first disciples were men of substance and position. They belonged to a class simple and independent. They were prepared to give up their worldly calling at the word of a Master whom as yet they imperfectly knew, and they were to find that they had obeyed a summons to work far greater than anything their imaginations had conceived. Meanwhile it seems as if Peter's house became the Master's home. Peter and his

¹ St. John (i. 35-42) definitely implies that the first disciples had been with the Baptist, and this corresponds with other indications (see above, p. 168).

² Mk. i. 16-18.

³ Lk. v. 1-11.

⁴ Mk. i. 19-20.

brother, the two sons of Zebedee, and perhaps others, became His constant attendants.

Thus began the Galilaean ministry. It is probable that to Peter himself we owe the effective but restrained account of this beginning. On the next Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and began to preach. All that heard Him felt that they were listening to something new and wonderful. The nervous tension stirred the unbalanced mind of one of those half-witted men, whom the thought of the day held to be possessed of an unclean spirit, and a disturbance took place. But the same authority and spiritual power which had been shown in the teaching rebuked and calmed the lunatic. Is it wonderful that the repute of this new Teacher with such strange power began to spread at once through the crowded villages and towns surrounding the Sea of Galilee?¹

From the synagogue Jesus went with His disciples to Peter's house—henceforth to be His home. There Peter's wife's mother lay suffering from a fever. He took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she became one of that group of women who ministered to His needs.² The Sabbath was now over. The sun had set. The knowledge of these new and strange events and of this wonderful Teacher had spread through all the town, so the sick and the afflicted were brought to the house, and the people crowded round the door, and "Jesus healed many that were sick and cast out many devils."³

But there was yet another experience. To the enthusiastic minds of the first disciples it might seem that a new age had come. They had listened to teaching such as no man had yet heard. They had witnessed the work of a strange and spiritual power. Would not all evil and misery speedily pass away? Jesus had begun to teach about the kingdom. Had not the kingdom of God upon earth come? They were full of expectation as to what would happen when morning came. But when morning came Jesus was nowhere in the house. He had risen very early and gone forth to be alone and pray. He had come to teach men spiritual things. Was He to be a mere miracle worker? One whom the

¹ Mk. i. 21-28.

² Mk. i. 29-31.

³ Mk. i. 32-34.

crowds could follow as they did some charlatan or impostor? So that they might be cured without troubling themselves about anything more. What seemed to these young and enthusiastic disciples the sign of His success might seem to Him failure. So when His disciples came to seek Him to bring Him back to the crowds that were asking for Him, He met their request by saying that they must begin and preach through all the villages round. For it was to preach that He had come. So they began to journey through Galilee.¹

Thus began the Galilaean ministry. Its centre was Capernaum, and the villages round the lake, in particular Chorazin and Bethsaida. At Capernaum He taught sometimes in the town, either in the house or in the synagogues, sometimes by the seashore. At times we are told how He sought solitude either alone or with His disciples on the range of hills behind the town. It is spoken of as the mountain. Then at intervals His ministry has a wider area. Accompanied by His disciples He goes on extended tours through Galilee, preaching from village to village. How far these missionary journeys extended must be to a certain extent a matter of conjecture. Once he visited Nazareth, with singular want of success.² St. Luke tells us of an incident which took place at Nain, on the south side of the plain of Esdraelon.³ This implies that His journeys had a fairly wide circuit. Once, at any rate, we are told how, perhaps to avoid the crowds, perhaps for reasons of safety as a temporary retreat, He crossed over to what was probably Greek territory on the further side of the lake; but that visit also seems not to have been successful.⁴

On His earlier journeys He was accompanied by a small body of disciples. Later the whole twelve were his companions, and St. Luke tells us how a number of women, some of whom He had saved from a life of sin, or cured of disease, followed Him and supplied His wants. Among

¹ Mk. i. 35-39.

² Mk. vi. 1-6. The position which St. Luke ascribes to this incident at the beginning of the ministry is obviously incorrect, as the narrative refers to events at Capernaum (Lk. iv. 16-30).

³ Lk. vii. 11-17.

⁴ Mk. v. 1-20.

them there seem to have been women of position. It is most probable that these journeys took place during the warm weather of the summer, when the low land by the lake might be too hot, and journeyings on the higher hills would be easier. Sometimes there would be those who would be ready to receive and entertain the company. We read of rich men with whom He dined, and occasionally even of Pharisees. Many villages and towns might have guest chambers. It would be the custom then, as now, in the East, to display ready hospitality, especially for a religious teacher. Probably this would be common early in the ministry, before an official opposition had grown up. Often, and especially later, there would be no place for them to sleep but on the hill-side. "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."¹

The main purpose of the ministry was to preach, and always, as long as it was possible, in the synagogue. Here was the centre of the religious life of the people and here—such was the custom of the day—was the opportunity for any new prophet or teacher to be heard. The synagogue, which might be found in every town or village, was generally a long, rectangular building. In the larger synagogues the roof would be supported by rows of columns. At one end was the Ark where the rolls of Scripture were kept, and in front of it the chief seats where the elders of the town or village and the ruler of the synagogue sat. At the opposite end was the gallery for women.

St. Luke has given us a typical picture of Jesus preaching in a synagogue.² Jesus entered, he tells us, on the Sabbath day into the synagogue as He was accustomed. When the Prayers, the Shema, and the Blessings were finished, came the reading of the Scripture. It would be the custom to call upon members of the congregation present to take part in the reading, and in particular any well-known Rabbi or teacher who was present would be asked to read and interpret. "They gave unto him the book of Isaiah the prophet, and he stood up to read. When he had opened the book he found the place that is written, The Spirit

¹ Lk. ix. 58.

² Lk. iv. 16-30.

of the Lord is upon me, because that he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to preach deliverance to the captives, and to the blind sight, to assure the contrite of deliverance, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he rolled up the book, and gave it to the minister, and sat down." All eyes, we are told, were turned on Him, and He proceeded to explain how these words were even then being fulfilled. The selection of the passage is significant because it informs us that Jesus intended to identify Himself with the Divine Servant of the prophet Isaiah, and shows us in what way He felt that the kingdom of God was at hand. They wondered at the beauty of His teaching, but in this case the spirit of opposition grew up and questions and controversy (as often elsewhere) followed the address.

The result of the teaching of Jesus and of the spiritual fervour that He displayed was widespread fame. Wherever He went crowds flocked to hear Him. People came to Him from all sides. When He was in a house they crowded round the door, so that no one could get in or out. They prevented Him from eating by their importunities. In order that He might have a means of escape from them, His disciples provided a small boat to be ready in case of need, and He used it to address them.¹ Often He retires for prayer and solitude. But always His fame seemed to increase, and people came from many distant parts to hear Him. They came not only from Galilee, but from Judaea and Jerusalem, from the country beyond Jordan, and even from the heathen cities of Tyre and Sidon.

II

On what did the influence of Jesus depend? What were the characteristics which caused His fame? It was, in the first place, His teaching. Of the burden of His message we shall speak shortly; we shall consider now its external characteristics. The most fundamental point might be summed up in one word, "authority." "They were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as having

¹ Mk. iii. 9.

authority, and not as the scribes.”¹ It was a new teaching. No doubt there was a dignity and charm of manner which contributed to this authority. There was, too, a distinction and originality of form singularly attractive. The teaching of Jesus is preserved to us, sometimes in short, sharp, pregnant, almost epigrammatic sayings, sometimes in fuller parables. It is vivid and picturesque. It expresses its meaning by simple homely metaphors which would strike the attention, would be easily remembered, and would appeal to an audience which was intelligent but little educated.

But the signs of authority are something deeper than this. Turn to the Sermon on the Mount, and listen to the words of the Beatitudes. Who is this who, with such a note of calm authority, lays down the conditions of inheriting the kingdom of heaven? or of being called sons of God? or who can make a promise that men shall see God? Who is He who would be so bold as to say that He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. The commandments had been given from Sinai, inscribed by the finger of God on the two tables of stone; who was this who said, “Ye have heard that it was said to Moses of old time,² but I say unto you . . .”? Here were claims very different to any which scribe or prophet had made; what wonder if people were astonished and impressed and attracted by His teaching, “for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

But it soon became clear that there were other unusual characteristics. There was no class of men more disliked than those who farmed the taxes of the country which were paid to a foreign Government. Their occupation was not only one exceedingly offensive in itself, but inconsistent with the stricter religious sense of the people. Then, again, to a person who professed to be at all a religious man, what could be more repulsive than a Jew who had adopted Greek ways, associated with Greeks at their meals, showed no scruples in the matter of food, and was in many ways faithless to ancestral traditions? It might be necessary for a

¹ Mk. i. 27.

² Mt. v. 17 ff.

business man to have dealings with the foreigner, but there was no excuse for anyone whose profession was religion. Capernaum was a place where both these classes of people—publicans and sinners—would no doubt be found. One of the great roads from the sea-coast to the interior came over the hills to the plain of Gennesaret, and thence ran northwards skirting the lake. The customs dues on this road belonged to the Empire, and here there would be a toll-house. It was something strange that it should be one of the tax-gatherers sitting at the receipt of custom that accepted the call to join the Master and become His disciple; it was still more strange that He should be seen sitting at meat in Levi's house with a company of tax-gatherers and of lax Jews, and even possibly of Greeks. And it was something very new that He said: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."¹

And it was soon found that there were many others, whom the conventional religion of the day left on one side, for whom the new Teacher cared. He was sitting at meat in a Pharisee's house, and a woman who was a professional harlot came in and began to wash His feet with her tears, and to wipe them with her hair, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with ointment; for He was weary and travel-stained. No wonder people were shocked. No wonder His host was astonished when He was compared disparagingly with the woman: "Simon, I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment." How great, too, must have been the astonishment when He went on; "Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much," and when He turned to the woman and said, "Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith has saved thee; go in peace." Here was a new

¹ Mk. ii. 13-17.

pity and a new authority. "Who is this that even forgiveth sins?"¹

His teaching, indeed, might be summed up in the words: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." It was not merely that He taught this. He carried it out in action. He lived Himself as a poor man, and those who were associated with Him, even if they had wealth, did the same. He spoke always of the dangers of riches and the blessings of poverty. Towards the poor, the outcast, and the sinners He exhibited neither scorn nor repulsion. He was always ready to help the afflicted, to show compassion to the suffering, and to the sinner that turned to Him there was forgiveness. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."² Is it wonderful that the outcast and the suffering came to Him, and that a company of women, some of whom had been saved by His sympathy from a life of shame and suffering, should have become His attendants, and have shown their love and gratitude by ministering to Him? Mary of Magdala has come to typify this spirit of the Gospel.

III

It seems to have been the almost universal belief of the human race in primitive times that human infirmities were to be ascribed to the operation of evil spirits, and this in relation to bodily as well as mental diseases. The right method, therefore, of dealing with sickness and of working cures was by some form of exorcism by which the evil spirit might be controlled and vanquished. Even when medical knowledge had advanced so far that as regards bodily infirmities this belief had grown weaker, or rather men were left in a somewhat confused state of mind in which the two theories were allowed to exist side by side, so that healing might be performed partly by the art of the physician and partly by the power of the exorcist, there would still be

¹ Lc. vii. 36-50. St. Luke derived this story, not from St. Mark, but from oral traditions or his special source. What relation it bears to the story contained in St. Mark, and referred by St. John to Mary the sister of Martha, must be doubtful.

² Mt. xi. 28.

few who would doubt that most of the diseases which we describe as nervous, all feeble-mindedness, lunacy, epilepsy, and madness were the direct result of the work of evil spirits.

So in Palestine in the time of our Lord it was almost universally believed that behind the material world, and exercising great influence both over it and over mankind, was a powerful army of spiritual beings, some good and some evil. The evil spirits were largely responsible for the prevalence of sin and sorrow and suffering. They were looked upon as a disciplined army under a leader who was called Satan, or Beelzebub, or by some other name, and there were many to be found everywhere who suffered from their machinations. Many of these sufferers no doubt had sinned, and it was generally believed that this demoniacal possession was something for which people were themselves to blame. We need not now discuss the various theories which might be needed to reconcile the existence of these evil powers with the supremacy of a just and good God. They were looked upon as a kingdom of evil over against and in conflict with the kingdom of God, and it would inevitably be thought that the triumph of divine rule would mean the suppression of the power of these evil spirits and consequently the cure of those who suffered. It was naturally believed that it was one of the functions of religion to promote the cure of such afflictions, and many elaborate forms of exorcism had become associated with religious life.

It was also the inevitable result of the prevalence of these theories that those who were "possessed" should themselves be influenced by such views, and in their strange mental condition, often such as would be described now as that of possessing a double personality, should firmly believe that there were evil spirits dwelling in them. They would be conscious of something which impeded the action of their will, and would believe that it was the work of the spirit in them, or they would think that they were themselves the evil spirit. In the days of trials for witchcraft in England, the unfortunate victims of superstition were often firmly convinced that they had the powers ascribed

to them, that they were witches; and they attempted to exercise the powers which they believed themselves to possess.

It was also an old belief that those who were possessed, whether, as was sometimes held, by a god or some other beneficent being, or by an evil spirit, had a knowledge which was more than human. There are indeed many phenomena which might seem to justify such a belief. There is often a very near kinship between the mind of some types of genius when it is over-excited and the mind of a madman. The half-witted will often say openly what the sane man with all the inhibitions which prudence and common sense create, will hesitate to reveal or express. The phenomena, in fact, as presented in the Gospels were exactly what might be expected. There we find those who were possessed with devils—that is, the half-witted and the insane—ready to express the half-felt intuitions of the people, showing their resentment and respect before a power which seemed to force their will, clearly identifying themselves with the spirits which were supposed to dwell in them, and becoming violent when they were controlled.

It has sometimes been thought that the circumstances of the time had created an especial outbreak of this evil. There is no need to think this. It is true, indeed, that the phenomenon is mentioned much more frequently in the New Testament than in the Old, but that really only implies a changed point of view. At the present day in England the workhouse, the asylum, and the infirmary provide homes for all such cases, but in old days the village idiot was a well-known institution; and if, as in the time of our Lord, all those who are now cared for and protected were left to wander about, often tormented and persecuted, always neglected, with no one to control them, finding homes in solitary places or tombs or caves, the misery described in the Gospels would be reproduced.

To cast out devils, to cure those possessed of evil spirits, is represented as the work of our Lord more constantly than any other miraculous activity. So certainly was His power recognized that His Pharisaic opponents thought it necessary to ascribe His cures to Beelzebub, the prince of

the devils. We are particularly told how, on His first journey through the villages of Galilee, He preached and cast out devils.¹ When He sent out the Twelve He gave them authority over unclean spirits.² The seventy, St. Luke tells us, returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in thy name." Jesus answered, "I beheld Satan falling as lightning from heaven."³ The power over unclean spirits was a sign of victory over the kingdom of evil.

The characteristics of this evil as they are recorded were sometimes violent madness and struggles exhibiting great strength. The unfortunate victim falls into the fire or the water; he foams at the mouth, he grinds his teeth, he has convulsions. Sometimes it is uncontrolled excitement, sometimes such afflictions as blindness, deafness, dumbness, diseases which, it may be noted, are often of purely nervous origin. Sometimes the lines between illness and possession are much confused—a confusion quite in accordance with popular superstition.

What was particularly recorded and caused so much astonishment was the authority that Jesus exercised over these spirits. He heals by His word, He particularly tells us that it is by the Spirit or finger of God that He has this power.⁴ He rebukes the spirits, they obey His express command. In His name His disciples cast out devils. When they fail it is through want of faith.

It is also noticed how the evil spirits recognize our Lord's divine power. "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of Israel."⁵ "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not."⁶ This violent recognition of Him as the Messiah might have been very dangerous to Him during the Galilaean ministry (as will become apparent), and Jesus, we are particularly told, suffered not the devils to speak because they knew Him. The meaning which was given to possession may be further illustrated by the fact that Jesus Himself was looked upon as mad and in the power of the

¹ Mk. i. 39.

³ Lk. x. 17, 18.

⁵ Mk. i. 24.

² Mk. vi. 7.

⁴ Lk. xi. 20; Mt. xii. 28.

⁶ Mk. v. 7.

devil. John the Baptist was said to have had a devil. In St. John's Gospel our Lord is said to be possessed of a devil because He says they are seeking to kill Him. "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." "He hath a devil and is mad."

I do not think that any distinction can be made between the characteristics of possession and the theories held about it as they are presented to us in the New Testament and the widespread beliefs of the time. Our Lord's language is completely in accordance with the religious and scientific ideas of His contemporaries. He acts recognizing fully what both the onlookers and those whom He cured would think. It is obvious that nothing else would have been possible on His part. Let us ask of those who feel troubled by this, what particular theory our Lord should have substituted for that current in His time. Do they think that He ought to have talked in the scientific and medical language of the present day? It is obvious that to have done so would have conveyed no meaning to anyone who heard Him, deprived Him of power and influence, made His actions vain and ineffectual. The one condition of being able to exercise His ministry as a man teaching men was that He should do it in accordance with the thought and ideas of the day. What theological theory is implied by this fact is a matter of future enquiry. We are not concerned at the present time with that problem. What is necessary to point out is that a religious teacher who in the first century of the Christian era adopted the scientific language and ideas of the present day would have talked in a language utterly incomprehensible to the people.

But further than that, what justification have we for thinking that the particular ideas that we have at present are in any absolute sense true or final? We may perhaps, with some reason, flatter ourselves that they represent a considerable scientific advance, but the science of psychology which deals with them is as yet only in its infancy. We are certain that the opinions held a hundred years ago are largely erroneous, are we quite certain that that will not be the opinion held a hundred years hence of what we think now? The only suggestion that from this point

of view would be intelligible would be that our Lord should have given an absolutely true and final account of the real nature of mental disorders, and thus should have saved the human race from the necessity of scientific investigation and discovery, so that we should never have had to find out anything for ourselves. I think that we shall all recognize how entirely inconsistent with all His methods and purposes this would have been. Our Lord's purpose was to teach mankind religion and not science. He did not come to do away with the necessity of human effort. He came to teach them to fulfil His will and thus live a life in which they might learn about God's work. So in every direction His science was the science of His own time, and not least in dealing with the phenomenon of possession.

In order to bring help and relief to the sufferings of His own time, Jesus spoke and worked in the way that harmonized with men's thoughts. That does not mean that their thoughts were true thoughts, or that His thoughts were not true. It means that He gave His message in the language and thought of the day. His power over these poor sufferers was very really the power of His Spirit exercised by His influence on their spirits. There are many phenomena at the present day which may afford us some analogy to His actions. It is quite certain that many men can exercise healing power over those afflicted with nervous diseases, and the experiences and investigations of the war have added much to our power and knowledge. It is equally true that a man's spiritual nature has much to do with his mental state. A sound, healthy religious influence will do much to create a state of mental sanity and to nerve a man to resist unhealthy mental tendencies. All these analogies help us to the comprehension of our Lord's work, and have enabled many to accept, perhaps in a somewhat modified form, the truths of the Gospel narrative who could not otherwise have done so. But these analogies must not blind us to the differences. There was a power and authority about our Lord's actions which was unparalleled then as it is unparalleled now. He exercised a spiritual authority which was unique

IV

But it was not only the mentally afflicted that our Lord healed, He exercised the same power over bodily suffering. "He healed many that were sick with various diseases." If not perhaps to the same extent as mental cures, yet the healing of bodily illness is represented by all our authorities as part of His ministerial work. It is narrated that while John the Baptist was lying in prison before his execution, he heard of the Galilaean ministry of Jesus. He was still in doubt. Jesus was certainly a great prophet, but He was hardly the Messiah as John had imagined Him. He did not do at all the things that people demanded. Was He the Messiah Himself, or was He only a great forerunner? So he sent His disciples to enquire. The answer of our Lord was characteristic. He did not openly desire even then to claim to be the Messiah. He did not depart from His normal attitude of reserve. We shall discuss, later on, the reason for this. But He bid the messengers tell John what they had heard and seen and leave him to draw the inference. "Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."¹

These words are significant. They are significant in their appeal to Scripture. Our Lord claims to be the complete fulfilment of the old dispensation. They are significant in the fact that they recognize the difficulties that many would have in accepting a Messiah such as He was. They are remarkable as being one of the rare occasions when our Lord is definitely represented as appealing to His miracles. It has been suggested that the passage is to be taken throughout in a spiritual sense, that it is the spiritually blind, the spiritually deaf, the spiritual lepers, the spiritually dead that are referred to. It is difficult to believe that this is the right interpretation, for the quotation from the Old

¹ Mt. xi. 2-6; Lk. vii. 19-23. The passage clearly comes from *The Discourses*.

Testament has been modified so as to introduce the reference to the miraculous. The passage comes from one of the earliest sources of the Gospel narrative, and implies that the spiritual power exercised by Jesus for the relief of human suffering was with the preaching of the Gospel message to be taken as a sign that the days of the Messiah had come, even if there was so little that corresponded to the conventional expectation.

If we examine the narratives of our Lord's life as we possess them, we shall see that they not only narrate stories of miracles, but also imply as part of the structure of the narrative and of the characteristics of the ministry that He possessed miraculous powers. Jesus had the reputation of working miracles. The centurion of Capernaum comes to Him because he has heard of these miracles.¹ The people flock round Him as He enters into a boat: "for he had healed many: insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him, that they might touch him."² When He preaches in the synagogue at Nazareth, it is not only His wisdom, but His reputation for miracles which causes comment: "What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean these mighty works wrought by his hands?"³ When they come to the land of Gennesaret, "straightway the people knew him and ran round about the whole district, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, when they heard where he was. And wheresoever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole."⁴

The narratives of miracles may be found in all the Gospels and in all the various sources. They are told, like other Gospel stories, in a manner that wins assent, and if we were not troubled by doubts about the possibility of the miraculous we should have no doubt about their authenticity. It will be most profitable if we examine some of the phenomena which are presented by these stories.

¹ Mt. viii. 5-10; Lc. vii. 1-10, from *The Discourses*.

² Mk. iii. 10.

³ Mk. vi. 2.

⁴ Mk. vi. 54-56.

The condition of a miracle was faith. In the story of the paralytic Jesus commends the faith that urged the men to make such efforts to bring the sick man into His presence: "And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."¹ To the centurion of Capernaum He said: "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. . . . Go thy way; as thou hast believed so be it done unto thee."² To the woman with a bloody flux: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."³ "All things are possible to him that believeth." "Have faith in God; verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it."⁴ And so the absence of faith prevents miracles being worked. At Nazareth we are told: "He could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief."⁵ A failure of His disciples to cure a demoniac is ascribed to the same cause: "And I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out: and they were not able. And he answereth them and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?"⁶

To most persons, I venture to think, these statements of failure will be strong evidence of the truth of the narratives. If there had been any desire to conceal what might seem to be inconsistent with what was claimed for Jesus, they would probably have been omitted. Had the other stories been moulded and fashioned, as has been suggested, to prove the theories of the authors, it is hardly likely that these incidents would not have suffered in the same way. They help to give the impression which the whole style of the narratives supports, that we are reading truthful stories of things as they happened. Moreover, the absence of anything mechanical about the healing power exercised by

¹ Mk. ii. 5.² Mt. viii. 10, 13.³ Mk. v. 34.⁴ Mk. xi. 23; Mt. xvii. 20, xxi. 21; Lk. xvii. 6. This saying was reported in more than one source.⁵ Mk. vi. 5.⁶ Mk. ix. 18, 19.

Jesus harmonizes with all that we learn in other ways about God's dealings with men. Jesus is not a magician and wonder-worker. His power is spiritual and requires for its effectiveness response. He has a deep insight into all who come to Him. He knows the reality of their spiritual nature, and His work shows how the spiritual can influence and triumph over the material.

This power of healing was an evidence of our Lord's spiritual authority, and He Himself, when needs be, appeals to it. When the scribes object to His forgiving sins, He asks "whether it is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house."¹ But although on occasions He may appeal to His miracles, His general attitude is that of reluctance to lay stress on them, and even often to perform them. He avoids the multitude. He goes apart into a desert place to pray. He crosses over to the other side to escape from the people that crowded Him. He heals the sick because He has compassion on them, and not to exalt His own reputation. So He is anxious that those who are healed shall not publish His fame abroad. To the leper He says: "See thou say nothing to anyone." When He raises up the daughter of Jairus, He charges him that no man should know this. Yet this is not always His action. To the demoniac (the incident, it must be noted, did not occur in Jewish territory) He says, "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he had mercy on thee."²

The reasons for the reserve and economy that our Lord exercised about miracles were more than one. He did not come as a wonder-worker, but as a teacher. If the people flocked round Him for no other reason than for the miracles that He did, His whole purpose would have been lost. The miracles would obscure the teaching. Nor would He ever work anything as a sign. When the Pharisees demanded a sign—that is, some conspicuous abnormal action so performed

¹ Mk. ii. 9, 10.

² Mk. v. 19.

that it might be held to be a certain proof of His claims—He refused. It is not so that He will win men's hearts. There is to be no mechanical proof. But the miracles were all the same an integral and essential part of His ministry. When Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles, sums up the characteristics of our Lord's work, he says that He went about doing good.¹ The miracles, in fact, were the translation of His Gospel into life. St. Matthew, when he repeats St. Mark's statement about the miracles which Jesus had wrought at Capernaum, adds the comment: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases."² It was part of His general beneficent work for man. That is why spiritual and physical activity are so closely bound together. He rescues men both from the burden of their sins and the burden of their diseases. That was the meaning of the miracles and the reason for their value as supports of His claims. They harmonized with His spiritual mission.

And thus they reveal how Christianity should act towards human want and misery. The purpose of Christianity was not directly to satisfy the material wants of mankind, or even primarily to diminish material suffering. Its message was spiritual, to make us be what we should be, to teach us to fulfil the Divine Will. But it is the Divine Will that we should help one another, and therefore the inevitable result of the Christian message is to impel men to do all they can to help and succour their fellow-men. So it has always brought with it the hospital and the nurse and the sister of mercy. But hospitals and nurses are not Christianity, and if we once begin to think so the emotions which create them will begin to fail. They are the inevitable accompaniment of true Christianity. Its aim is to make us fashion our lives according to the pattern God has given us. Just in the same way to work miracles was not the work of Christ. The work of Christ was to teach mankind and to save men from their sins, but because the essence and motive of the Gospel is love, therefore it was by works

¹ Acts x. 38.

² Mt. viii. 17.

of mercy that Jesus revealed to mankind His spiritual power.

And this will help us to understand the nature of miracles. The attitude of scientific men has to a large extent changed in certain directions. It is recognized that the mind has a far larger influence over the body than was at one time realized. It is also recognized that the power of suggestion exercised by one mind over another is very considerable, and that the combined power of two minds thus working together may produce real bodily cures. It is recognized further that mental conditions, and in particular religious emotions, are an important feature in the control of health. As a result of all these new points of view the attitude of some of those who are called critics towards the Gospel miracles has changed. They no longer maintain that the events did not happen, but they say that they are not miracles. It may be doubted whether this easy solution is really tenable. The phenomena described will not really come within these particular formulæ, and the position of believing just so much as the fashionable theories of the moment allow is hardly intelligent. We are still, I think, left in the position of either refusing to accept what appears to be quite good evidence, or of accepting phenomena which are inconsistent with ordinary experience.

The miracles of our Lord, even the miracles of healing, really present something which, if they happened in any way as is related, are different from any phenomena which are within ordinary human experience. It is possible to explain them away, but not so as to carry complete conviction. Some would divide them into two classes, and call some natural and some unnatural. The difficulty about that is that our acceptance or not, or our partial acceptance, depends upon the particular scientific theory in vogue at the moment. Now the great mass of miracles of healing are widely accepted. A few years ago they were not. Another change in scientific methods might make new theories about miracles possible. Many which were condemned in old days are now accepted. We have, indeed, no certainty that every miracle recorded in the Gospel happened as is described. But the moral I draw is that

the evidence for miracles (not every miracle) is good, and that to attempt to deny them on *a priori* grounds is singularly unscientific.¹

V

If we try to sum up the impression created by the Galilaean ministry as it is described in the Gospels, we may say that it presents a unique exhibition of spiritual power. It is shown by the spiritual character of our Lord's teaching, by His wonderful personal influence, by His power of healing those who were afflicted, whether in their minds or bodies. It stirred up the people of Galilee; the fame of it spread throughout the neighbouring countries; it made much questioning and debate as to who this Teacher, so wonderful, but so different from conventional expectation, might be, and it roused, as might be expected, the inevitable opposition.

It was, indeed, hardly to be expected that teaching such as that of Jesus should go on without arousing opposition, nor that these great popular demonstrations should fail to cause anxiety to the authorities. We have now to recount the steps by which a breach gradually grew up between Jesus and the official religion. A series of incidents recorded by St. Mark at this stage in the narrative are clearly designed to point out to us this situation, and their evidence is corroborated by other incidents recorded elsewhere. They give us a quite clear presentation of the points of difference, but there must be some doubt as to whether they are the story of a series of actual events which followed one another in the manner described, and give us a consecutive account of the development of the quarrel, or whether they are typical instances collected by St. Mark from different sources and arranged as they are without regard to chronological sequence. For the purpose of our narrative it does not make much difference which is the case. Even if the

¹ On miracles I would refer to what I have written in *The Miracles of the New Testament* (London: John Murray, 1914), where the literature of the subject is fully discussed. I would add here the definition which I have suggested of a miracle (p. 335): "A miracle means really the supremacy of the spiritual forces of the world to an extraordinarily marked degree over the mere material."

order is chronological, they cannot give us a connected history, as they are far too fragmentary.

If we take the Sermon on the Mount as in any way representing our Lord's preaching, it is obvious that it must have aroused criticism and opposition. There were throughout all the towns and villages of Galilee scribes who were the professional teachers of the law. They were attached to the synagogues, they assisted in the administration of justice, and were no doubt often engaged in teaching. Their tendency would, no doubt, as professional lawyers, be towards a strict and uninspiring insistence on the legal elements of religion, and as the people of Galilee tended to show a somewhat daring laxity in their views they would often be in opposition to the more popular forms of religion. Galilee, we must remember, had a bad reputation in Jerusalem. The majority of the scribes were probably attached to the party of the Pharisees, as the stricter sect, and we have, indeed, a special reference to "the scribes of the Pharisees." With the scribes would be associated such local members as there were of the party of the Pharisees. It may be doubted whether they were very numerous. But, clearly, there were already in Galilee, on the one side, a populace which would be very ready to hear teaching like that of Jesus, on the other side an official class which would resent it. Then, as the Ministry progressed, as the fame of it became wider, Pharisees and others would come down from Jerusalem, sent, perhaps, by the Sanhedrin to report on and, if possible, repress this dangerous movement.

The first instance that is given us of the beginnings of criticism is at the healing of the paralytic. A great crowd had assembled in and about the house, and among them were some scribes, no doubt already present in a critical spirit. The purpose of the assembly was to listen to the teaching of Jesus. When the sick man was brought in and Jesus said to him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," it is not wonderful that it aroused misgivings. "Why does this man speak so? He is speaking blasphemy. Who can forgive sins but God only?" The criticism was not unreasonable. Jesus was making claims which demanded

acceptance or rejection. An attitude of toleration was hardly possible.¹

It is, however, often the smaller things which are more likely to cause an open breach, and the violation by a popular religious teacher of the customs of religion and the rules of social exclusiveness was just what would create bitterness. Not only did Jesus admit a member of the hated publican class among His disciples, but He was quite willing to enter his house and to sit at meat with a mixed company of "publicans and sinners"—that is, probably of lax Jews, and perhaps even Greeks—and he never deviated from this custom.² He was always prepared to associate with Himself the outcast and the sinner. Some of the women who followed Him were probably drawn from the class of professional harlots, and in an incident recorded by St. Luke the complaint is made against Him that He allows a woman to minister to Himself without apparently recognizing her character. No doubt all this unconventional conduct seemed very shocking in a religious teacher.

There was another complaint. Why did not this man who made such great religious pretensions impose on His disciples any rule of fasting. All really religious people, it was said, fasted; why did not they? Surely all this was inconsistent with the claims that He made?³

But the most serious cause of difference was the question of the Sabbath. This was just the point where the question of the interpretation of the law touched practical life. Much of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount might be irritating, but it was rather in the air. No real harm, it might be said, could come from it. It was different with the Sabbath. Here the most sacred prejudices of Judaism were touched. There is always a tendency in a certain type of religious mind towards a scrupulous strictness of observance, and this in the case of the Jews had appeared in its most rigid form in the regulations that had grown up about the Sabbath. It was these customs that more than anything else preserved the separation between Jew and Gentile, and the mere fact of the inconvenience that it might cause to a Jew living among the heathen, and the

¹ Mk. ii. 1-12.

² Mk. ii. 13-17.

³ Mk. ii. 18-22.

great temptation that there would be to laxity, would increase the determination to be strict. In the Hellenizing period before the Maccabaeen revolt, one of the signs of unfaithfulness was extreme laxity concerning the Sabbath, and that will help us to understand the fanatical adherence to what was supposed to be the law, which caused over a thousand refugees to be massacred in a cave without making any defence rather than be guilty of breaking the Sabbath. This incident led to some modification of the custom, but there were many other occasions in history when the Jews allowed their strict adherence to religious rule to hamper them in warfare.

But there were other directions in which an over-strict rule caused an over-elaborateness of regulation. First of all, a series of regulations were laid down as to what a man might or might not do on the Sabbath. Then, when the keeping of these rules was found to be impossible, there was developed a curious system of casuistry, by which many of them might be evaded. An essential part of the teaching of Jesus was to reveal a spiritual religion in the place of a formal one, and it was in relation to the Sabbath that the clash came between what He and the Rabbis taught. He would have nothing to do with all their strict rules and all these shams and evasions. Here, as conspicuously as anywhere, we have strong spiritual principles. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath Day, to save life or to kill? We may notice with interest that at the very beginning of our Lord's ministry He had cast out an unclean spirit on the Sabbath Day in the synagogue, and afterwards had healed Peter's mother-in-law, and there had been no criticism. People were so impressed by His authority and the wonder of the cure that criticism had not begun. But when the opposition grew up it was on this more than anything else that it fastened itself, for here Jesus was in constant opposition to the conventional religious life, and it was here in all probability that the breach between Him and the organized religion of the day became acute.

He entered into a synagogue according to His custom on the Sabbath Day. We are not told the place, but it

was probably at Capernaum, for the centre of His teaching must have been always the centre of opposition to Him. There was a man there with a withered hand. The whole scene may have been prepared beforehand as a trap to ensnare him, for there were Pharisees present on the look-out. The opposition was apparent, but our Lord did not shrink from the crisis. It was a clear case which exhibited the different principles. Was it lawful to break the rule of the Sabbath in order to do good? No real answer could be given, so those who were determined to crush His teaching remained silent. Jesus was grieved at the hardness of their hearts and healed the man.

Events gradually reached a crisis, and a conspiracy was formed between the strict Judaizers and the Herodians. These supporters of the Herods were opposed to any dangerous popular manifestation which might shake the position of that dynasty. For such half-native rulers were only tolerated by the Romans as the best means of keeping order among a turbulent people. In particular, any Messianic movement was dreaded by these courtiers. It would not only cause disturbances, but it seemed to reflect on the lawfulness of the Herodian rule. On the question at issue between the Pharisees and Jesus they were probably indifferent. But they were glad to have the support of these earnest and fanatical people. So this unholy alliance was formed.

It is perhaps the case that now began the separation of Jesus from the synagogue.¹ It is noticeable that after this on only one occasion in St. Mark are we told of Jesus preaching in the synagogue, and that was the incident at Nazareth which may have been wrongly dated. Henceforth for a time His addresses are to crowds in the open, on the mountain slopes, or by the sea, or in some solitary place to which He had retired. Whether He was definitely expelled from the synagogue we do not know, but this open breach would, in any case, create a public scandal. This may have been the reason why those about Him (whoever they were) tried to lay hold on Him, saying that He was

¹ As Dr. Burkitt thinks (*The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 80).

mad.¹ Another and even more significant fact is that on the next occasion when we have any account of controversy, it is scribes that have come down from Jerusalem that take part in it.² It is no longer a mere local question. The authorities at Jerusalem are disturbed. They have obviously sent down representatives to investigate and check this dangerous teaching, and they do this by spreading the accusation, no doubt a serious one in those days, that Jesus was in league with evil spirits, that He worked, as would have been said in the Middle Ages, by black magic. It is obvious that the breach has become serious.

But as yet there was no check to His popularity. Crowds come together from all parts to hear Him, so great that while they throng about Him along the shores of the sea, His disciples find it necessary to have a boat ready to enable Him to escape from their importunities.³

VI

This separation from the synagogue had an important result. It meant the beginning of the organization of the Christian Church.

In a sense, perhaps, the Church began at the moment when our Lord attached to Himself the first disciple; from another point of view, the Christian Church began after His death, on the day of Pentecost; but the time when this breach between Him and the representatives of official Judaism in Galilee became acute may well be looked on as the decisive point in the development. For what did it mean? It meant that the Jewish people in their existing organization would not accept Him. Crowds might come to hear Him; the people might be full of expectation and enthusiasm; but if He entered the synagogue there would be no call upon Him to speak. It is probable that the breach was not as yet final. We do not hear of any excommunication, or that He had been turned out of the synagogue. Occasionally He might still have an opportunity of preaching there. But henceforth the national

¹ Mk. iii. 21.

² Mk. iii. 22.

³ Mk. iv. 1.

organization was not at His disposal, and the nation as a whole could not follow Him.

From the beginning Jesus had attached disciples to Himself. What discipleship meant beyond personal attachment we have no certain knowledge. If the statement of St. John be correct, He continued the custom of baptism which He had inherited from the Baptist, and as we are particularly told that He did not Himself baptize, but only His disciples,¹ the account has the element of probability. It is not likely that the custom which had begun with the baptism of John should have been left off for a time and then been resumed after our Lord's death. He Himself had been baptized that He might fulfil all righteousness,² and if such was the estimation in which this new baptism was held, it is not likely that it would have been suddenly dropped. The reason that there is no reference to it otherwise in the Gospel is that the Evangelists had described the beginning, and otherwise they did not further dwell on what was normal.

What else was implied in discipleship we do not know. Probably what was remarked at the time was the complete absence of anything in the way of formal rule. An ordinary religious teacher in the East would impose a rule—probably a strict rule of life. The Essenes would be the most remarkable example of this. John the Baptist seems to have had some rules. It is most probable that Jesus imposed none. It was a complaint against Him that His disciples did not fast as did those of John the Baptist. It was not until they asked Him that He gave them a prayer, and then one remarkable for its shortness and its contrast to the vain repetitions so often associated with religion. It is quite probable that at an early period in the ministry there was some form of common meal which was sacramental in character from the first, and finally consecrated at the Last Supper. But, fundamentally, there would be no rules. His followers were being trained to worship the Father in Spirit and in truth.

Apart from mere hearers there were soon many disciples who followed Jesus.³ We are particularly told that there

¹ Jn. iii. 22, iv. 1.

² Mt. iii. 15.

³ Mk. ii. 15.

were many of them, and that from the beginning some of them were very closely attached to His person. But if the sequence of events as given in St. Mark is correct, and it has, indeed, all the signs of probability, it was just after the breach with the stricter Jews that He took the definite step of selecting the Twelve. The occasion seems to have been the coming together of a great multitude from many places and distant cities. It is probable that the presence of this great body of strangers would make demands on His care and forethought. Some, at any rate, would need help and assistance. When this multitude was assembled on the seashore Jesus went up to His place of retirement on the mountain above the town. He summoned to Him those whom He had chosen, and appointed the Twelve.

They are spoken of on one occasion as Apostles.¹ That was certainly the name that they bore later, but it is one seldom used in the Gospel narrative. They are normally called the disciples, being included in the general company, and when the reference is to them particularly, the name by which they are known is "the Twelve." The purpose of their selection, as the name Apostle implies, is that they might be sent out to preach; but it is probable that the more important duty was that which is mentioned by St. Mark, "that they might be with Him." These words throw real light on the purpose of our Lord, and imply that a definite stage has now been reached in the foundation of the Church and the fulfilment of what Jesus designed to accomplish. If His work was not to be carried out by the national Jewish Church—and it had become plain that it could not be—then other means must be found. Crowds might come to hear Him preach, or still more be attracted by the fame of His miracles, but how could they help to the fulfilment of His purpose? So far as they had any expectations, they were looking forward, as will become apparent later, to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. How could the true teaching which Jesus had come to bring to mankind be preserved and taught? There must be a body of men trained to accomplish this, men who

¹ Mk. vi. 30. The words "whom also he named Apostles" in iii. 14 are very doubtful.

would be always with Him, to whom He might entrust His deepest teaching, who might learn much which the people could not understand, who might carry on the message when the Master was taken away. It is certainly significant that henceforth we hear less of popular teaching, and more of instruction of disciples. In a short time we shall find Him taking a wide journey with them where many opportunities could be given for their private teaching, and very soon He tells them: "To you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God."¹

We have four lists altogether of the Apostles, and it is somewhat remarkable that there should be variation not only in the order, but in the actual names. This seems clear evidence that some of them had but little importance in the future history of Christianity. While the leaders were in a real sense founders of the Church, the majority are seldom mentioned in the Gospel narrative, and soon were nothing but names. This seems a sufficient ground for thinking that this list of the Twelve is authentic. If, as some have suggested, the list had been drawn up at a later date without any sound tradition, names would have been inserted which were known in later history. For the same reason also we may believe that the choice of Matthias described in the Acts was historical. Had the event been imagined at a later date, a name would have been selected which was not entirely insignificant.

The list of these Apostles is, in all our sources, divided into three groups of four each. To the first group belong the best known names. At the head in every list stands Simon Barjonas. His designation of "First" implies that he was looked upon as the chief and leader of the Apostolic band, a position which the narratives of the Gospel and Acts alike support. Either now, or perhaps earlier, he had received the name of Cephas, but the Gospels, influenced by his subsequent fame, know him best by the Greek form of it, Peter. It was necessary to distinguish him from other Simons, as the name was common, and Jesus had clearly selected him as the one on whose faith and enthusiasm He would found the Church. He had been one

¹ Mk. iv. 11. On this subject see Latham, *Pastor Pastorum*.

of the disciples of the Baptist. In those early days he had already become attached to Jesus, and if the conjecture we have ventured on be true it was to seek him that Jesus came to Capernaum. He had an impulsive, generous nature, but there was a curious strain of weakness in his character. He eagerly steps forward on the waters, but his faith fails him when he begins to sink. Yet there was always a loving hand ready to save him; and his impulsive enthusiasm was just what was wanted to give men a lead. If he once started others would follow, and some who were a little hesitating at the beginning might show themselves a little firmer when the test came. So, in spite of his faults he is the rock on which the Church is founded, and at the end of an adventurous life in which he played a part greater, perhaps, than he understood, in spite (if legend may be believed) of one characteristic shrinking, he crowned his life by a martyr's death in the imperial city and gave his name to the proudest monarchy of the world.

His brother Andrew never played any such part, but if the story in St. John's Gospel may be trusted, he has one great title to fame. He it was who came first to Jesus, and he it was who brought Peter to Him. There are many men who have performed one essential act in their lives and have then been content to play a secondary part.

The two brothers James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were very different characters. It has already been pointed out that possibly they were cousins of Jesus, their mother Salome being the sister of the Virgin. They had also been disciples of the Baptist, and they, with Peter and Andrew, were the first called. With Peter they formed the inner circle of the Apostles, and were on all special occasions the chosen companions of their Master; they were present at the Transfiguration and at the agony in the Garden. The two brothers were named Boanerges, which is interpreted for us as "the sons of thunder."¹ It seems fairly certain that there is some corruption in the text, but the interpretation need not be a mistake. There was something fierce in the enthusiasm of these two sons of Zebedee. They were too eager for the reputation of their Master, and too eager for

¹ Mk. iii. 17.

their own positions in relation to Him. They would call down fire from heaven on the churlish Samaritan village, and received a stern rebuke.¹ They would seek for themselves a too prominent place in the Messianic kingdom, and learnt another hard lesson.² But their fault was but the over-eagerness of a too warm affection and an over-zealous loyalty, and they, too, received the due reward of their faith. James was the first of the Apostles to follow in the steps of his Master and lay down his life. But what of John? Did he, too, perish early, as some would hold, or was the son of Zebedee the disciple whom Jesus loved, who in after years, an old man in distant lands, told, on the shores of the Aegean, the last stories of the wonderful days by the Sea of Galilee?

The second group was headed by Philip, a native of Bethsaida, a disciple of the Baptist, the bearer of a Greek name. The most interesting of the personal memories of him, which we find in the fourth Gospel, makes him the agent through whom the Greeks desired to come to Jesus. Does that imply not only a Greek name, but a Greek origin? And did he also become one of the wanderers from Palestine who ended their days in Asia? Or was this a confusion with the Philip who was one of the Seven?

With Philip is always associated Bartholomew. The name is a patronymic, the son of Tolmai, and no doubt he had also a personal name. Again a problem arises. May we identify him, as has often been done, with that Nathanael, "the Israelite in whom was no guile," who had been one of the followers of the Baptist and whose call the fourth Gospel brings into close connection with Philip?

The next pair were Matthew and Thomas. Matthew was identified by the author of the first Gospel with that Levi, the son of Alphaeus, who had been a tax-gatherer.³ There is nothing else to support the identification, which may naturally cause some questioning. Was it the result of the association of his name with that Gospel? And does it embody any early tradition? Thomas bore the Greek name of Didymus or the twin, the Apostle who was ready

¹ Lk. ix. 54.

² Mk. x. 35.

³ Mk. ii. 14; Lk. v. 27; Mt. ix. 9.

to go to Bethany to die with his Master, who doubted and confirmed the Resurrection.

At the head of the third group came James, the son of Alpheus, hardly to be identified with any other James, but perhaps the brother of the publican Levi.¹ With him was Thaddaeus, of whom nothing is known, for whom St. Luke substituted, probably by a doubtful identification, Judas the son of James.² More interest attaches to Simon the Zealot, whose designation tells us that he was a link between the disciples of Jesus and that fourth sect of the Jews (as it is called by Josephus), the followers of Judas of Galilee, who represented national aspirations in their most extreme form. Last of all came Judas, called Iscariot; possibly the name means the man of Kerioth in Judaea, in which case he would be the only Judaeon member of the band. He was the betrayer.

The list of the Apostles contains the names of a few men well known in Gospel tradition and in history, of others almost unknown. Its nucleus was formed by a body of fishermen from the Sea of Galilee, who were the first called, the most faithful, and the most conspicuous. Some of the Apostles had Greek names, and may have been of Greek origin. One had perhaps belonged to the hated class of tax-gatherers; one had taken part in the wildest nationalist movement of the times. Most of them were not men of any distinction, but all, with one exception, were, so far as we know, loyal and faithful followers of their Master during His earthly life, and after His death in the early days bore their part in recording His life and teaching and in organizing the kingdom which was called after His name.

With these disciples there was associated a body of women who were the companions on some occasions of His wanderings and ministered to Him of their substance. St. Mark tells us that there were present at the crucifixion Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James the Little and of Josès, and Salome, who when He was in Galilee followed Him

¹ Since "son of Alpheus," in Mk. ii. 14, iii. 18, is most naturally interpreted as referring to the same Alpheus.

² Lk. vi. 16; Acts i. 13.

and ministered to Him.¹ St. Luke tells us that He was accompanied by certain women who had been healed from evil spirits and sickness—Mary, called the Magdalene, from whom went forth seven devils; and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; and Susanna, and many others. "These ministered to Him of their substance."²

Of these the most famous was Mary Magdalene. She came from Magdala, a rich town in the plain of Gennesaret, of evil reputation, and the Christian Church has always held that she had been rescued from a life of sin. Salome was the wife of Zebedee and probably the sister of the Virgin. Mary, the mother of James the Little and of Joses, was the wife of Clopas, the brother of Joseph.³ The mention by St. Luke of Joanna, who was the wife of an official in Herod's court, is interesting, for it is among the characteristics of St. Luke's writings that he seems to have a certain amount of knowledge of the Herodian court. She was one who attended the Lord to the end.⁴ Of Susanna we know nothing further.

Some of these women were, no doubt, persons of substance, as may no doubt also have been some of the Twelve. Whether there were other men besides the Twelve who were at this time associated in any close intimacy with Jesus we do not know. The whole company lived, it seems, a communistic life. They had a common purse which was entrusted to Judas Iscariot, who showed himself, we are told, unworthy of the trust.⁵ They formed a little flock who accompanied Jesus in His wanderings and became the depositaries of His teaching.

The first appointment of the Twelve was followed by a period of preaching and teaching to the crowds who had come to hear this new Prophet. But a time came when, either wearied with the effort and desiring solitude, or perhaps wishing to carry His message further, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee and landed at a place called Gerasa or Gergesa on the opposite coast.⁶ The result does not seem to have been satisfactory. Later came another and perhaps

¹ Mk. xv. 40, 41.

² Lk. viii. 2, 3.

³ This conjecture comes by combining Mk. xv. 40 with Jn. xix. 25.

⁴ Lk. xxiv. 10.

⁵ Jn. xii. 6.

⁶ Mk. v. 1.

a longer tour through Galilee. It included an unsuccessful visit to His own home, Nazareth.¹ This tour occupied some time, and was followed by a further extension of the work of preaching. The Twelve had now been with Him some considerable time. They had learnt something of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and now they are sent forth two and two to carry their message from village to village.² This mission of the Twelve marks the close of the Galilaean ministry, for events were happening which brought to an end the first stage of our Lord's work.

How long this Galilaean ministry continued we have no certain means of knowing. There are no definite indications of time, and it is as uncertain as is the whole length of our Lord's ministry. One thing seems to me clear. We must not unduly shorten it. It included at least two tours of some length through Galilee, it had seen the growth of a considerable measure of popularity and the development of a strong opposition, it had seen the organization of an embryo Church. A period of two years would certainly not be too great.

¹ Mk. vi. 1.

² Mk. vi. 7.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW TEACHING

THE Gospel of St. Mark impresses upon us the fact that the most important work of Jesus was His teaching. It was that, above all things, and probably more than His miracles, which attracted attention. "They were astonished at his teaching." "Let us go to the villages round about that I may preach there, for for this purpose I came forth." Before the miracle of the five thousand we are told that "he began to teach them many things." Later, again, towards the close of the ministry, it is said: "And as he was accustomed he again taught them."¹

But though from St. Mark we gather that the ministry of Jesus was a teaching ministry, about the teaching itself he tells us little. He gives us only fragmentary specimens. There is no attempt to present the message in at all a systematic form. The reason for this was most probably that other documents were in existence which contained this teaching, and that the main purpose of the second Gospel was to describe His life and works. At any rate, this is what it does. This deficiency in St. Mark is made up by St. Matthew, who in the Sermon on the Mount² gives us a carefully arranged account of the teaching of Jesus, and supplements it by other long discourses.

There are certain preliminary questions to which we should like an answer. How far is the sermon as we have it due to the compiler, and how far does it come from earlier sources? Does it represent an actual sermon spoken

¹ Mk. i. 22, 38; vi. 34, x. 1.

² St. Matthew, chapters v.-vii. The sermon in St. Luke is in chap. vi. 20-49. There is a very large literature on the subject. In Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Extra Volume, there is a convenient summary which gives references to all the more important works.

by our Lord on some pre-eminent occasion? Or is it only a compilation of His sayings? If it represents an actual sermon, at what time and on what occasion was it delivered? If not, how far may it be looked upon as an actual representation of His teaching?

Besides the sermon in St. Matthew there is a similar one in St. Luke, sometimes called the "Sermon on the Plain," as it is stated to have been preached there. A considerable part of it seems to cover the same ground as does St. Matthew, but it is far shorter. There is sufficient resemblance to show that for a large amount of it there must be a common source. It is not only that there is identity of subject-matter, there is also identity of order. But which represents the original form? In St. Matthew's sermon there are 107 verses, of these 58 have parallels in St. Luke, but only 26 in the sermon; the remaining 32 are in other chapters and in different contexts. In St. Luke's sermon there are about 8 verses which do not occur in St. Matthew, there are 4 verses common to St. Mark, and a few which are also reported in other places in St. Matthew's Gospel.

If we take St. Matthew's sermon by itself we may look upon it as a new law: it was to take the place of the old law delivered on Mount Sinai, and for that reason it was placed at the beginning of the Gospel. As when the law was made on Ebal and Gerizim there were the blessings and the curses, so we have the Beatitudes, and there were also, in one form of the tradition, the woes. Then comes the relation of the Old Law and the New Law, and the character of the New Law is put before us in a series of illustrations. Then comes the New Worship, in its three-fold division of Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting. From this we pass on to the fundamental characteristics of the New Life. It is a life which concerns itself with things eternal, and not with the things of this world. The new life also has its rules for our conduct. Then there is an appeal to live this higher life; and the sermon ends with the contrast between the life founded on the rock, the words of Jesus, and the life founded on the shifting sands of worldliness. St. Matthew gives us a well-arranged account of the ethical teaching of Jesus.

But is this the earliest form of the document which we can arrive at? We know from other instances that it was St. Matthew's habit to collect together words of our Lord from different sources and belonging to different occasions and to arrange them according to their subject-matter.

This might lead us to think that the sermon as he gives it was mainly due to his editorial skill, but there are reasons which might make us modify this conclusion. A considerable portion of the sermon of St. Matthew which is omitted by St. Luke dealt with a subject which was of vital interest in the time of our Lord and to the Jewish Church, but had little concern for the Gentile Christians for whom St. Luke wrote. It might be held, therefore, that he omits them for that reason. Moreover, the sermon as we have it in St. Luke reads very much like a summary in which only the most striking passages have been preserved. On the other hand, it is difficult to see why, if St. Luke had before him in a connected form all the verses which he gives in other contexts, he should have taken the trouble to arrange them differently and remove them from the contexts in which the sermon gave them.

There is some reason, then, for thinking that the two writers had a source before them in which a considerable part, but not the whole, of the sermon was contained in a connected form. What were its limits must be, however, so much a matter of conjecture that it is hardly worth while to attempt to solve the problem. If we examine the various reconstructions that have been attempted, we shall find in them the differences which always must arise in dealing with the history of documents where so much of the evidence is internal and subjective.

But was this original sermon a compilation, or did it go back to an actual sermon of our Lord? Again we must be content with considerable incertitude. Jesus preached many times. The same teaching must have been given on many occasions, to many audiences, in language sometimes the same, sometimes different. A single discourse intended as a great pronouncement would not have been consistent with what we can surmise of His methods. He did not, as we shall see, begin by making claims about His

person. He gradually led His disciples on so that they might arrive at their own conclusions. So in the new teaching. We should not expect a great and startling pronouncement, or a systematic exposition. We should expect Him by parable, by proverb, by epigram, by taking advantage of any incident that occurred or any question that was asked, gradually to lead men on to these new conceptions. His teaching, therefore, seems to have been preserved originally in fragments, in short sayings, in characteristic remarks, often repeated, easily impressed upon the memory; sometimes (it might seem) contradictory to one another. Gradually He would, by His words and acts, make an impression. Gradually what He said would appear as having definite principles and systematic ideas behind it, but the systematic exposition of philosophic teaching is often the work of the chronicler and the compiler. It has been done very well for us by the author of the first Gospel, assisted as he was by the source that he used, and we shall not make a mistake in following his guidance. Jesus was an ethical teacher, but He did not produce a system of ethics any more than Socrates a system of philosophy.

I have grave doubt, therefore, whether we can look on the sermon as we have it either in St. Matthew or St. Luke as a discourse delivered in this form. But, on the other hand, we need have no doubt that the substance of the teaching is original, or that St. Matthew gives us a correct impression of the teaching by his systematic arrangement. The combined testimony of the first and third Gospels tells us that for the great body of it we have an early source. There are parallels to some passages in St. Mark, and the amount of variation which exists between the different traditions is so small as to be nearly negligible. But more than that, there are abundant parallels to the subject-matter of the teaching in our Lord's words, as reported elsewhere in these two Gospels and in St. Mark. The tradition, too, of Christian teaching preserved in St. John's Gospel and in St. Paul's writings harmonizes with it. There is, in fact, no reason for thinking that we have not a quite authentic tradition of the ethical teaching

of Jesus. The variations in the tradition are neither considerable nor important.

If these conclusions be correct, there is no occasion for the final question, When was the sermon delivered? Both Evangelists find occasions for it in connection with incidents recorded in St. Mark. St. Matthew connects it with a great influx of disciples from all parts, but transfers it to the beginning of the ministry. He wishes to introduce the account of our Lord's life by a summary of His teaching. St. Luke connects it with the call of the Twelve. No doubt on both these occasions our Lord gave much teaching; probably He said many of the things that we have in these sermons; but there is no certainty that these actual discourses, as we have them, were connected with these particular occasions. It will be most useful for our purpose if, following the example of St. Matthew, we arrange in a way suited to the point of view of the present day, the great principles of our Lord's teaching.

I

When the law was proclaimed on the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim, blessings were promised to all those who hearkened to the voice of the Lord, the blessing of a prosperous and successful life:

“Blessed shalt thou be in the city and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

“Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle.

“Blessed shall be thy basket and thy kneading trough.

“Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in and when thou goest out.”¹

The new law also begins with a promise of blessing, but to those who had been brought up in the temporal aspirations of the old law or under the shadow of the material Graeco-Roman civilization, how startling must have seemed the contrast!

“Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹ Deut. xxviii. 2-6.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they that are persecuted, for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."¹

What is the idea that these words imply? Who are the poor to whom belongs the kingdom of heaven?

It may be remarked with interest, and its significance will be shortly apparent, how much in these Beatitudes is directly drawn from the Old Testament. That is in a marked way true of the leading conception. "The poor" had become a recognized name for the pious and devout.² It is a regular refrain of the Psalms, that God forgetteth not the cry of the poor. "Arise, O Lord; O God lift up thine hand; forget not the poor."³ The poor, "the Lord is his refuge."⁴ "Turn thou unto me and have mercy upon me, for I am destitute and in misery."⁵ "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord careth for me!"⁶ In contrast to this it is the wicked and the proud who spoil the poor. "He doth ravish the poor when he getteth

¹ Mt. v. 3-10; Lk. vi. 20-22.

² I owe the following note to Dr. Burney: "'Poor in spirit' is not at all what we mean by 'poor-spirited.' There are two expressions, like each other in form and nearly related in meaning, which frequently occur together in O.T. One of these is usually translated 'meek' and the other 'poor'; but a more correct rendering would be 'humble' (before God), and 'humbled' (by external circumstances—*e.g.*, the persecutions of the godless). The phrase in the Gospel denotes those who are 'humbled' *because* they are 'humble' (towards God)—*i.e.*, because for religious motives (their attitude towards God) they refuse to take steps to avenge themselves or assert their rights. The best commentary on the two expressions is to be found in 1 Peter ii. 23, 'who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' This is the true Christian spirit."

³ Ps. x. 12.

⁴ Ps. xiv. 6.

⁵ Ps. xxv. 16.

⁶ Ps. xl. 17.

him into his net''!¹ It is the proud particularly whom the Lord abhorreth.

The reasons for this usage go back to the days after the exile. While the rich aristocracy of the temple always tended towards latitudinarianism, if not to actual disloyalty to their faith, there grew up a body of Jews for the most part, no doubt, actually poor and socially inferior, who were devoted to the law and religion of Israel. They were in a humble position. They were subject, no doubt, to a great deal of contempt. A time came when, under Hellenistic rule, they were bitterly persecuted. But their delight was in the law of the Lord: they were eager to fulfil the will of God, and they put spiritual above material aims. As the Chasidim they were a devoted if difficult body of men at the time of the Maccabees. From them sprang the Pharisees who, when they acquired authority and position, became themselves the proud. But their representatives had always remained in Israel, men who preferred piety to wealth or honour or power.

It was these that our Lord described as "the Blessed," the men who cared for heavenly riches and not for earthly, who were often poor in earthly things, and always poor in thinking little of wealth, who were humble, who hungered after righteousness, who were sincere in their heart, merciful in their judgment and disposition, who were prepared to endure any form of persecution for the sake of what they held to be righteousness; and it was these who would ultimately attain the promises, the blessedness of a life lived in harmony with God, the acquisition of righteousness, which is the greatest of all possessions, mercy in God's judgment, the inheritance of the earth, and the kingdom of heaven.

There is in these promises a curious and interesting mixture of the spiritual and earthly, and often the language is ambiguous. No doubt by many our Lord's words were taken in a simple way. The poor, the wretched, the hungry, the persecuted would soon find their condition changed. The Messianic kingdom would shortly be established. In that kingdom it was they who would be rich and prosperous

and become the chief men of the earth. Some expected all these things; and it was true that Jesus cared for the poor and needy, and had compassion on all infirmity. We shall often come on such misinterpretations, and this was the reason why, at a great crisis of His ministry, when it became apparent that this was not what He was going to accomplish, many forsook Him. But that was not the main thought of Jesus. His conceptions were very different. He was thinking of the blessedness of the spiritually-minded, and the blessings were to be spiritual. To them was the kingdom and the inheritance, but that meant that all their spiritual longings would be satisfied, that they would be the sons of God, and would attain the beatific vision of the sight of God.

We have already compared the ideal with that of the Old Testament. We might illustrate it also by the contrast that it affords to the ecclesiastical ideal which grew up in the Christian Church. From the Acts of Paul and Thecla, an apocryphal story which dates probably from the end of the second century, we learn how it was thought necessary to rewrite the Beatitudes and thus make up for the deficiencies of the Gospel.

When Paul, we are told, entered into the house of Onesiphorus there was great joy and bending of the knees and a breaking of bread and a word of God on asceticism and resurrection, and Paul said:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are they that have preserved their flesh pure, for they shall become the temple of God.

"Blessed are the ascetics, for to them God will speak.

"Blessed are they that have resigned the world, for they shall forthwith be called.

"Blessed are they that have wives as though they had none, for they shall inherit God.

"Blessed are they that have fear of God, for they shall become Angels of God.

"Blessed are they that have preserved their baptism, for they shall rest in the Father and the Son.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy and shall not see bitterness in the day of judgment.

"Blessed are the bodies of the virgins, for they are well pleasing to God and shall not lose the reward of their chastity."¹

The contrast between the apocryphal and the genuine tradition is most illuminating. This later interpretation introduces imperfect ideals, quite inconsistent with the universality, the comprehensiveness, and spiritual elevation of the words of Jesus.

II

If our Lord's message was so startling in its novelty, what was to be its relation to the existing order of things? He recognized that His message was something new. He describes it as new wine. It could not be put into old bottles. The new wine would burst the old wine skins. There must be new bottles for the new wine of the Gospel. You cannot mend the rent in the old garment by sewing in a piece of strong new cloth. If you do the old cloth will be torn even more. New garments will be necessary.² Such metaphors imply that Jesus contemplated as the result of His teaching a new order of things. The old order was passing away.

Teaching such as His was bound, indeed, to stir up all sorts of questionings. Practically the great difficulty arose, as we have seen, on the question of the Sabbath. Here was something which touched the customs of ordinary life and the most cherished prejudices of Judaism; but if isolated as a practical illustration, it was really only the result of the normal teaching of Jesus. The question must inevitably arise, What was His relation to the law? The law, it was held, was the greatest thing in the world. It had been delivered to mankind by God Himself through the medium of angels. Some of the Rabbis had said that the world was created that the law might be kept. The law, it was believed, was obeyed in heaven as well as on earth, and the heavenly conclave waited impatiently to know the judgment of the Rabbis on the problems before

¹ *Acta Pauli et Theclae*, 5, 6; in Tischendorf, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, p. 42.

² Mk. ii. 21, 22.

them.¹ If that were so, if the law was holy and just and good, how could it ever come to an end? The will of God must be eternal. How, then, if the teaching of Jesus conflicted with it, could that teaching be (as He claimed) divine?

No doubt questions like this often arose, and St. Matthew has selected for us various and apparently conflicting sayings on the subject. Jesus said: "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." He said: "No jot or tittle of the law shall pass away until all be fulfilled." He said: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."²

Our critics would suggest to us that sayings such as these represent the later controversies of the Church. Clearly the same person could not say such contradictory things. Some of them came from those who thought that the whole law should continue to be kept, some of them came from the Pauline party. Clearly they are inconsistent with one another.

But another point of view is possible. If there were two such distinct parties in the Church, does it not suggest that both of them alike might have reason for claiming that they represented the real tradition and had genuine sayings of Jesus on which they supported their claims? Did He not often put His teaching in a form which was puzzling, even contradictory? His clear, incisive statements were often almost paradoxical. How could both of these parties feel that they were loyal to their Master, if they had not words of His to which they could appeal?

And when we understand His teaching, we shall find that it reflects both these points of view. We shall not understand it, unless we realize that it was just the whole of the Old Testament that He claimed to fulfil. It was owing to this completeness that there were large elements in His teaching to which there were no parallels in current Judaism. The Scriptures as a whole had a meaning to

¹ On the authority of the law, see *Die Lehren des Talmud*, by Ferdinand Weber (Leipzig, 1880), chap. viii.

² Mt. v. 17-20.

Him. But this meaning was not the conventional one, neither was it anything fanciful or allegorical. It was a deep spiritual principle that underlay and inspired the partial manifestations of the old law. It was the new law and the new covenant and the spirit which Ezekiel looked on as a sign of the Messianic times. So He said that He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; He said that no point of the law should pass away, but yet that He came to give a teaching which would make it obsolete, a righteousness greater than anything which scribe or Pharisee had found in it. There was a permanent and a spiritual element in the law, and that He preserved, but it might mean the passing away of much that was temporary.

It is this that the Sermon on the Mount makes us realize. The author of the First Gospel has collected together for us from various sources illustrations of the way in which the new teaching comprehended but superseded the old. Some of these illustrations we have in other accounts of our Lord's teaching, such as His method of dealing with the law of divorce and marriage, and they are all consistent illustrations of one principle. They are introduced by the words: "Ye have heard that it was said to men of old time, but I say unto you," which imply that Jesus was deliberately and consciously giving a new law to expand the old, or rather, as will become clear, substituting life for law.

When we come to examine these instances, we see that they lead us up to certain profound ethical principles. The old law was a system of rule, admirable in character as rules go, but with all the limitations of such a system. The new law was one of principles. The old law forbade murder; the new law forbade angry thoughts. The old law forbade adultery; the new law forbade evil thoughts. If we banish all our evil and impure thoughts, the evil actions which arise from them will be impossible.

But we can advance further. The old law was negative. Its maxim was "Thou shalt not." The new law is positive. The old law said "Thou shalt not kill," the new law says "Thou shalt love." The old law distinguishes between those who have done good to you and those who have done evil. To each was due his fitting recompense. It was a

law of retaliation. The new law tells us that all mankind are to be the subject of our affection.

"Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and shall hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. If ye love them which love you, where is the merit? the publicans also love them; and if ye do good to those which do good to you, where is the merit? even the Gentiles do the same."¹

So we are brought to the great Christian precept of love. It was clearly a fundamental part of our Lord's teaching. In St. Mark's Gospel we are told how a scribe asked which was the first commandment. It is significant that the answer is given in the words of the Old Testament Scriptures. The first commandment was "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God," and "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." The second was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."² To this St. Luke appends a parable, which probably formed one of those which he had collected to illustrate the universal humanity of Jesus, and is of particular interest to us in this connection. The scribe, anxious to justify himself, asked, Who is my neighbour? a very apposite question. There follows the story of the good Samaritan, the particular point of which was that the Samaritan, the enemy by race and religion, exhibited just the compassion and love towards a man in difficulties which the priest and Levite failed to show, and that thus we might learn that the obligations of Christian charity transcend race and creed.³

The essence of our Lord's teaching is that all commandments may be summed up in the one commandment of love. If you have the right feelings towards other men, you inevitably abstain from all those wrongs, murder, theft adultery, slander, which in the old order were forbidden by specific enactments. Now it is of deep significance that here, as almost always, our Lord draws His teaching from

¹ Mt. v. 43-47.

² Mk. xii. 28-34.

³ Lk. x. 26-37.

the Old Testament. It is certainly remarkable that there should be found in it, only waiting to be discovered and drawn forth and placed in its proper proportion, the more spiritual religion which we call Christianity, and, we might add, it is equally impressive with what unerring touch our Lord extracts just those spiritual principles. But the limits within which the rule of loving your neighbour should prevail were either not fixed or fixed only in a narrow way in the Old Testament. Its teaching imposed spiritual and humanitarian rights and duties within the limits of the Jewish nation. There was indeed the broader element on which Jesus built up the teaching of Christianity, but the natural deduction from its language was that which bid you hate your enemies, and that was the deduction which the Jewish commentators arrived at.

That teaching is summed up by the great Talmudic scholar, Lightfoot, as follows:

“Here those poysonous Canons might be produced whereby they are trained up in eternal hatred against the Gentiles, and against Israelites themselves who do not in every respect walk with them in the same traditions and rites. Let this one example be instead of very many which are to be met with everywhere. ‘The heretical Israelites, that is they of Israel, that worship idols, or who transgress to provoke God: also Epicurean Israelites, that is Israelites who deny the Law and the Prophets, are by precept to be slain, if any can slay them and that openly; but if not openly you may compass their death secretly and by subtlety.’ And a little after (O! ye extreme charity of the Jews towards the Gentiles): ‘But as to the Gentiles with whom we have no war, and likewise to the shepherds of smaller cattel and others of that sort, they do not so plot their death, but it is forbidden them to deliver them from death, if they are in danger of it.’ For instance, ‘a Jew sees one of them fallen into the sea, let him by no means let him out thence: for it is written, Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbour: but this is not thy neighbour.’ And further: ‘An Israelite who alone sees another Israelite transgressing, and admonisheth him, if he repent not, is bound to hate him.’”¹

¹ Lightfoot, *Works* (London, 1684), vol. ii., p. 152, quoting Maimonides.

The Old Testament contained, then, the germs and principles of the New, but it did not teach them, and this may be our answer to the question as to the originality of our Lord's teaching. Parallels with it have been extracted from many and varied sources, from the Rabbinical writings, from Greek and Roman moralists, from Eastern religions. And these bear witness to the reality of the teaching, and show how universal is the recognition of the power of love as an ethical principle. But it is one thing to recognize the principle, it is another to make it the rule of conduct. It is one thing to realize its power, another to see its scope as wide as humanity. What Christianity accomplished is shown by the fact that it created what we may look on as a new word. The word *agape* had, up to the time of our Lord, been little used. From that time onwards it is the recognized word for a fundamental principle of conduct. A new word was needed, one which would express the power of a pure passion without that element of sensuality which must always be found in *eros* or *epithumia*, and with an element of emotion which is hardly present in *philia*. But this conception of the principle of love as universal and including within its scope all mankind had a wider effect. It inevitably made Christianity the universal religion, and, further, it created the conception of the solidarity of humanity. All barriers of race and language must ultimately vanish, when once it is recognized that our relations to one another are to be controlled by the principle of brotherly love, and that the obligation of that love must be extended as wide as the human race.

III

The Christian ethical system, then, is based on "love," or, as it was called by our forefathers, "charity." It may be interesting to compare it with other great principles in which the motive of human conduct has been sought.

The Greek system made *arete*, or virtue, the ideal of conduct. Its word for good was *kalos*, a word which contains as part of its connotation the ideas of the honourable and the beautiful. The highest moral conduct to the Greek

must have an element of external magnificence. It had no place for what was common or vulgar. The virtue of a moral act performed in commonplace surroundings by those of no account would count little in their estimation. To die for your country would be glorious, especially if it were done in a glorious way. To sacrifice your life for a slave or a person of no account would be absurd. There is no need to eliminate the idea of beauty from the highest morality; it is, indeed, part of it; but it is not that beauty is moral, but that the moral is beautiful.

Then there has always been a tendency for humanity to base morality on negatives, to make abstinence and asceticism the norm of conduct. This has been a striking characteristic of many Eastern forms of religion, and has often been associated with a dualistic belief in the evil of matter. This tendency has in varied forms invaded the Christian Church, whether it is that of abstinence from all sexual indulgence, as in the days of the early Christian Church, and to some extent in the mediaeval—an abstinence which was often a natural reaction from the extreme impurity of the surrounding society—or in the hard morality of the Puritans, which seems to have been a reaction from the over-enjoyment of life which the Renaissance taught, or in the singularly meagre morality of the modern temperance devotee. There will, of course, always be an element of asceticism in the highest morality, for love will demand self-restraint and self-sacrifice, but in its essence the ascetic motive in morality as an end in itself is fundamentally non-Christian. It was an accusation against Jesus in His lifetime that He was not ascetic. His disciples had had no rules of fasting given them. He Himself (unlike the ordinary professed religious teacher) was ready to accept hospitality of a very mixed character; He took part in the marriage feast; He did not shrink with horror from the professedly immoral, but recognized even there the elements of piety and devotion. Jesus Himself notes the contrast: "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces which call unto their fellows, and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn. For John came neither

eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"¹

There is, in fact, in the teaching of Jesus just that element of what we call humanism, an interest in humanity in itself, which is so often absent from Eastern religions while it has been fortified in Christianity by Hellenic influence. Asceticism alone can never form an adequate basis for conduct. It creates often a hard and unattractive type of character. There is nothing positive about it. Christianity demands positive actions. It bids you do. It does not think much, any more than Jesus did, of human lapses. It thinks of beneficent actions. The ideal is the man who, inspired by the love of God and man, or in our modern language by a passion for humanity, or by sympathy with the sufferer, is prepared to sacrifice himself for what is good. It does not care for the house swept and garnished, but for the living power of the Spirit. It makes a man strong to overcome the temptations of the flesh by the ardour and enthusiasm of life which it creates, for here is an emotion and a passion, and not a rule.

Another great ideal that has inspired human conduct is that of duty, the conviction that a man has a place and work assigned to him in the world, and that he is responsible to God and to his fellow-men for fulfilling that duty. This we look upon particularly as the ideal of ancient Rome, and of the Stoic philosophy, at any rate in its Western form. It is depicted for us by Seneca and Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. It has created and attracted many great minds. It was an appeal recognized by Jesus Himself: "I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day."² The Christian, of course, does his duty. Duty is, indeed, a part of love. But duty by itself is but a cold and bare motive. It does not rouse our enthusiasm or kindle our imagination. The soldier or the statesman does his duty to his country, not only because it is his duty, but because patriotism, the love of his country, stirs all his emotions. Loyalty to the Sovereign has often made hardships and self-sacrifice easy

¹ Mt. xi. 16-19; Lk. vii. 31-34.

² Jn. ix. 4.

to be borne. The love of God and of humanity transforms the burden of the law into the freedom of the Gospel. The supremacy of the Christian ideal lies in the fact that it marshals our emotions on the side of righteousness.

A further question arises: How far is the Christian ideal a possible one? Is it possible in this world to carry out consistently and sincerely the Christian ethical system? Is it one which would practically work in the world and not produce chaos? Is it possible, for example, to love our enemies? Can I really feel the emotion that we call love for those who are enemies to us and have done us wrong? Our Lord, however, explains to us what He means: we are to do good to them that hate us, bless them that curse us, and pray for them which despitefully use us. Now towards masses of men we can hardly have the emotions which we call love, but we can (and we have attempted to) treat our enemies justly. Can we, further, actually love an enemy? That is, can we towards the individual enemy with whom we are brought in contact exhibit feelings of sympathy and compassion? Can we help him when he is suffering? Are we able to act so as to make his lot an easier one? There can be no doubt that again and again it has been done. Men have exhibited such conduct both towards those who are enemies to their country and also to personal enemies; and the fact that it has so often been found possible has done much to mitigate human suffering. Men have learnt to check and restrain resentful feeling towards those who have injured them. In religious disputes they have sometimes learnt to separate resentment against error from hatred against the heretic. All these things have been possible; nor is there any reason why such Christian sentiment should not prevail more widely, except the imperfection of human nature and a widespread disloyalty to the Christian message. It is not that the Christian ethics are impossible, for they have been tried and found successful, but that people do not like them.

A second difficulty is raised by the law of non-resistance. Resist not evil. Turn the other cheek also. Give up thy cloak. Give to him that asketh thee. How impossible such conduct would be! If we were to act like this, society

would quickly come to an end, and wrongdoing would be rampant. The strong would oppress the weak. What would happen if we allowed the enemy to invade the country without opposing him, and the forces of anarchy and disorder to destroy the work of civilization? Such, it is claimed, is the necessary interpretation of these words, and, in fact, as thus interpreted, they have been made the basis of a scheme of life by Tolstoi. With great insistence, but without an equal amount of argument, he claims that here is a definite command of our Master which must be literally obeyed. He would maintain that if the use of force in resisting evil were done away with, the ideal Christian society would be created. An examination of this claim will be of value in enabling us to understand our Lord's methods.

Throughout in the teaching of Jesus there is an element of paradox, and it might seem of exaggeration. Sometimes His commands seem mutually contradictory. But if they sometimes seem impossible in practice, that is no reason why they should not be true as ideals. The Christian rule of marriage is, perhaps, one which it would be impossible to impose absolutely in a state of society such as exists at present, but it is the ideal basis of a happy society and may well be the self-imposed rule of a section of the community. No one can live without taking thought for the morrow, and it would be wrong to try to do so, but the less a man is troubled with worldly forebodings the greater his happiness will be. Commands such as these cannot be fulfilled literally now, but if society were constituted as it ought to be, it would be easy to fulfil them. If the will of God prevailed absolutely, then the full and literal fulfilment of these rules would be normal. Our conduct is necessarily conditioned by the state of society.

How, then, can we act? It will often happen that in the present imperfect condition of human society two principles of conduct must conflict. Christianity bids us do good to others; it therefore bids us protect the weak and suffering. To accomplish that I must take the necessary means. That implies that the use of force to fulfil our Christian duty is necessary and legitimate. But it still

remains true that the gentle answer and the refusal to resent injury are often among the most efficacious means of restraining violence. The more it is possible to act according to the precept and example of Christ, the better society will become. A society in which an insult demands a duel will become one of strife and evil passions. If adultery may be justified by killing the injured husband, it is the bravo that will benefit. The more we act as Christians, the more Christian society will become; and when society is Christian the only possible rules of conduct will be Christian.

IV

The practice of religion has always been associated with the performance of certain external acts which are often looked upon as its most essential elements. What was the relation of Jesus to such acts?

There were, it must be remembered, two systems of religion in Israel. There was the old traditional sacrificial system which was bound up with the national life; but, as since the reform of Josiah and the exile this system had been confined to Jerusalem, it was something outside the ordinary religious life of the people, certainly in districts as remote as Galilee. Its place had been taken by the synagogue system.

We have reason to believe that our Lord as a loyal Jew would attend the temple of Jerusalem at the time of the greater feasts. Such visits are recorded in St. John's Gospel, and there is nothing in the other Gospels which could make such visits improbable. But there is little teaching as to sacrifice. He expresses his approval, indeed, of the scribe who said that the love of God and of our neighbour is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. He bids the man who would present a gift before the altar be first reconciled to his brother, and then offer the gift—that is, moral and spiritual duties come first.

Again, He speaks with severe condemnation of the devotion on the part of the Pharisees to external religion, and this condemnation becomes stronger as His ministry advances. The ceremonial washing of the hands and of

vessels, the distinction of meats and so on, are of little or no importance. What did matter was the state of a man's heart towards God. If the heart was good, good things would come out of it; if the heart was evil, evil things, and good thoughts and words and actions were what mattered.

In the ordinary life of Judaism, the life of the man who had been brought up on the precepts of the law, there were three great religious observances—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. In the Book of Tobit, which contains the best presentation of the simple religion of an ordinary Israelite, we read: "Good is prayer with fasting and alms and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: alms doth deliver from death, and it shall purge away all sin."¹ There was a tendency to exalt almsgiving into a meritorious act which might bring atonement: "This money goes for alms that my sons may live, and that I may obtain the world to come." "A man's table now expiates by alms, as heretofore the altar did by sacrifice." "If you offer alms out of your purse, God will keep you from all damage and harm." The value of alms done in secret was fully recognized: "He that doth alms in secret is greater than our master Moses himself."² But there is ample evidence of ostentation in almsgiving, then as now. Prayer had become organized. There were three stated hours of prayer, and it was held that where a man was there he should pray. This was the occasion or the excuse for much prayer in the streets which might become, and often was, mere ostentation.³ So with fasting: "They say of Rabbi Joshua ben Ananiah that, all the days of his life, his face was black by reason of his fastings." That was from the ashes he put on his head. "On the day of expiation it was forbidden to eat, to drink, to wash, to anoint themselves."⁴ In fact, there was a certain inheritance of

¹ Tobit xii. 8, 9.

² On Jewish sayings regarding almsgiving see Lightfoot, *Works* (London, 1684), vol. ii., pp. 153, 155.

³ On prayer see Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, ii., 156.

⁴ On fasting, *ibid.*, ii., 161.

ostentatious customs, and the dominant religion tended to be ostentatious.

In contrast to this, Jesus taught that religion was to be something inward, spiritual, and sincere. It was a matter between the devout soul and God. He did not lay any stress on fasting. Fasting was not a custom of His disciples; although He spoke of the time when their natural sorrow after He was taken away would make them fast. In fact, people were not to fast because they thought they ought to do so, but because it was the natural expression of their religious feelings, and so the very essence of it was that it should be secret. "Be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret."¹

On one occasion we are told how He watched men casting alms into the treasury. Many that were rich cast in much, but a poor widow cast in two mites that make a farthing. Jesus said to His disciples: "The poor widow has cast in more than they all. They cast in of their superfluity; she hath cast in all that she had."² It is the sacrifice involved in the gift, and not the amount, that matters. So here, again, ostentation is condemned. "Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth."³

The rule of prayer is the same. Prayer is the secret converse of the heart with God. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. And thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee."⁴ But while Jesus laid but little weight on almsgiving and fasting, it is prayer—and the point is significant—that He looks upon as the most important exercise in religion. He dwells continuously on the efficacy of prayer. "Ask and ye shall receive. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you."⁵ This He states without qualifications. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."⁶ He deduces this belief from the Fatherhood of God. Earthly parents will answer the requests of their sons; how much more will God who is our Father in heaven?⁷

¹ Mt. vi. 18.

² Mk. xii. 41-44.

³ Mt. vi. 3.

⁴ Mt. vi. 6.

⁵ Mt. vii. 7.

⁶ Mt. xxi. 22.

⁷ Mt. vii. 11.

Like so many other of Jesus' maxims these statements are made in an extreme and almost exaggerated form. We can gloss them if we like, and He also could have done so had it been necessary, but that was not what He was concerned with. What He aimed at was to impress on us that we are in the hands of a Father in heaven, and that in our prayers we tell Him our most secret needs.

Yet the right spirit is always assumed. We cannot ask forgiveness of our Father unless we, too, forgive. We must ask in faith, and faith would be inconsistent with petitions which would only show our faithlessness. Our prayer must be simple and sincere, and based on a desire to fulfil God's will. That is what Jesus taught His disciples when they asked Him how to pray:

“ Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth, as in heaven.
Give us this day the food sufficient for our needs.
Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive our trespassers.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.”¹

In these seven short petitions He sums up our right relation to God: His fatherhood in heaven—that is, His transcendency and providence; the promotion of His glory as the final end of creation; the fulfilment of His purpose in the coming of His kingdom—that is, the fulfilment of His will in the world; our dependence on Him for our earthly sustenance; our need of forgiveness and a forgiving heart, and salvation.

Throughout our Lord's teaching on worship and the religious life there runs a single note. In the place of the great external system of worship which had been built up at Jerusalem, in the place of the mass of formalism and externalism which Pharisaism had come to be, in opposition to the meaningless and often disgusting ceremonialism of the heathen, he preached a religion of the Spirit. In St. John's Gospel we are told how Jesus, talking to the

¹ Mt. vi. 9-13; Lk. xi. 2-4.

woman of Samaria, told her of the higher worship, which would take the place of that of Jerusalem or Gerizim: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem ye shall worship the Father. . . . The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."¹

We are not able to say whether the author of the fourth Gospel had here a tradition which has not been preserved elsewhere, or whether the story is what would be called in Jewish literature a "Midrash"—that is, a story written for spiritual and religious edification. The language is certainly that of a later time, and whether the story be true or not, the teaching has been translated both in letter and in content so as to suit later ideas. But the important point for us is that the story correctly interprets the spirit which underlies all that Jesus taught about the religious life, whether it is contained in the Sermon on the Mount, or found elsewhere in the Gospels.

V

The essential thing in life Jesus taught was righteousness and sincerity of aim. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light."² That is, if your mind be set on the true end of life and pursue it without any mixed and unworthy motives, your life will be right. All depends, not on a number of particular rules, but on having a right principle of life, and pursuing it whole-heartedly.

What, then, is the purpose of life? To most men wealth and riches, with all their accompaniments, were the only aim, then as now. Jesus continually emphasized how worthless such an aim was. "A man's life," he said, "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."³ He told the story of a rich man whose wealth increased, who pulled down his barns and built greater ones, who looked forward to many years of worldly happiness: "Soul,

¹ Jn. iv. 21-24.

² Mt. vi. 22; Lk. xi. 34.

³ Lk. xii. 15.

thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God said unto him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee. Where shall thy treasure be?"¹ He tells us, too, of the rich young man, who claimed to have kept all the commandments: "One thing thou lackest," said Jesus, "Go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me."² "How hardly shall they that have riches (or that trust in riches), enter into the kingdom of heaven."³ He bid men lay not up treasure upon earth, for earthly treasure decays, but in heaven where there is no rust or corruption, and He adds these words which show the significance of His teaching. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."⁴ It is not the mere possession of earthly wealth or the acquisition of it that He condemns, but the harm done to a man's moral nature by the imaginations of the heart being set on the wrong things.

It is not, indeed, the enjoyment of wealth that He is concerned with, but the anxious troubling about worldly things. We are not to be over-anxious about our life, our food, our clothes, our personal appearance. We ought not to be always wondering what our future will be, whether we shall have enough in days to come. These are not the really important things. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."⁵ We are told how once Jesus entered a certain village and was entertained by two sisters, Martha and Mary. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word; Martha was cumbered about much serving. Martha complained to Jesus that she was left by her sister to do the work alone. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."⁶

If, then, all these things—food, and drink, and wealth, and all the enjoyment and business of life—all these things which seem to be men's natural aims, are wrong, what is right? The answer is, "Seek the kingdom," and if we

¹ Lk. xii. 19, 20.

² Mk. x. 21.

³ Mk. x. 23; Lk. xviii. 24.

⁴ Mt. vi. 21.

⁵ Mt. vi. 34.

⁶ Lk. x. 38-42.

must know what that means, we may for the present be content with the interpretation given by St. Matthew, "righteousness."¹ That must be our aim.

Now, what view of the world does this imply? Does it mean that we are to live an ascetic life, indifferent to the life of the world? That is hardly possible, for Jesus Himself did not give us an example of such a life. He pursued His work, and to that He gave up everything, but He never refused or objected to the enjoyments of life when they came to Him. It was one of the accusations against Him that He, as a religious teacher, did not refuse the invitations of the rich men whose reputations were so doubtful. "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."² He was always anxious to relieve the distressed and to heal the sick. He bids us use our wealth for the well-being of the poor. If we are to care for the earthly well-being of others, if (as Christianity has always done) we are to care for the good estate of the poor, it is a proof that material goods are not in themselves evil.

Or does it mean that Jesus thought that the great day of the Lord was at hand, that this present dispensation would pass away, and that therefore we need not trouble about mere transitory things? The only thing that matters is to secure an entrance into the kingdom when it comes. This problem will meet us more fully later; at present it is sufficient to ask what could be the purpose, if this was all that life meant, of this elaborate teaching about human conduct and human life? It is true that our Lord and His disciples appear to have lived without any thought for worldly things at all, in quite a literal way; it was the right condition for their work, and there were many who ministered to Him. But did Jesus mean everyone was to do as He did? It has been maintained that He did, and in order to support this theory all the teaching in the Gospels inconsistent with such a view of human life has been eliminated. But surely the fact that such an elimination is necessary must make us hesitate to adopt such a theory.

The real meaning of our Lord was none of these things,

¹ Mt. vi. 33.

² Mt. xi. 19; Lk. vii. 34.

but one which harmonizes with all that was most fundamental in His teaching; it was the transcendent importance of spiritual things—that is, the fulfilling of the will of God, and this will was righteousness. We find it emphasized in the story of the Temptation: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”¹ It is this principle that gives a meaning and coherence to all those maxims which we have been discussing, and is the lesson that Jesus Himself lived and died to give. The first principle of life must be to fulfil God’s will—that is, do right; the rest does not matter, whether it comes or not. Compared with this all earthly things are indifferent; wealth, pleasure, comfort, luxury—to trouble about these things does not bring happiness, but misery. If happiness is made the end of our life, we shall not attain it; if we do not seek it, we may have it.

For the promise is quite explicit: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”² Is that a meaningless promise? At any rate it is not isolated. For example, in St. Mark’s Gospel we read how, when Peter said, “We have left all and followed thee,” Jesus said, Verily, “I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands for my sake, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time.”³

Are such promises to be looked upon as meaningless? Are they inconsistent with the Spirit of the Gospel? Or do they represent a fundamental principle of the Gospel and give the reasons why it is good news for mankind? The answer is this: The first condition of human well-being is that we should fulfil the will of God. If we are too eager for the acquisition and enjoyment of wealth, we shall ultimately lose all. If we prefer wealth to righteousness, wealth will ultimately perish. If we prefer righteousness to wealth, it will be the gain of the world. If the world were absolutely righteous, it would mean the highest human well-being. But there may be many who, to attain righteousness, may have to sacrifice everything. Just as the

¹ Mt. iv. 4; Lk. iv. 4.

² Mt. vi. 33; cf. Lk. xii. 31.

³ Mk. x. 29, 30

well-being of a nation can only be attained if its citizens are willing to make every necessary sacrifice for it, so the well-being of the world depends upon our being willing to sacrifice the world for righteousness. Each man's individual well-being consists in the pursuit of righteousness. If he sincerely seeks righteousness, it is well with him, whatever may happen. Other goods may come to him, at any rate the well-being of the world will be increased.

VI

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets."¹ Thus Jesus summed up the rules of practical life. This Golden Rule had long been taught in a negative form. "What thou hatest thyself, do to no one," said Tobit.² "That which is hateful to thyself do it not to thy neighbour: this is the whole law, the rest is commentary." So said Hillel.³

It is most significant that in Christ's words we should have the law summed up in a maxim which had its source in Judaism. It is equally significant that it should transcend previous teaching by being no longer merely negative, but positive. Here, indeed, we have the whole essence of Christ's teaching. It is not anything out of harmony with its historical sources and their development. It gives us all that is most spiritual in the Old Testament. That Old Testament, it must be remembered, was also the source of Rabbinism. How could the Rabbis avoid giving much sound moral teaching when they were but expounding the word of God? They may have often overlaid and concealed the simpler truths, but they could not destroy them. It was its living continuity with the religion of His own times that made the teaching of Jesus so suitable for those who heard it.

But it always transcends its source. The fundamental principle of Christian morality is that it does not content itself with directions as to what is not to be done. It always

¹ Mt. vii. 12; cf. Lk. vi. 31.

² Tobit iv. 15.

³ See above, p. 82.

lays stress on what we are to do. If a man's inspiration is love, he will be full of eagerness to do all he can for those around him. But what is to be the standard of his conduct? How can he know in what way to exhibit his love to others? The standard given is, Do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Under this heading will come all the commandments, and given as it is in this positive form it is not only a rule, but an inspiration.

Nor is it to be limited to acts. Words and thoughts also come within its scope. There is nothing more harmful than the hard judgments which people pass on one another. In judging others we have to remember ourselves. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."¹ Nothing is more evil than over-censoriousness. Do we wish other people to take a lenient view of our faults? Let us be lenient to them. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."² How often it is that those who are most convinced of the defect of others are entirely oblivious of their own. "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."³

Here, as always, we notice that the morality of Jesus is not limited by a concern with actions, but because it has gone down right to the fundamental principles of life, therefore it deals with the springs as well as with the external manifestations of conduct.

VII

We have attempted to sketch the "New Teaching" of Jesus, as it has been depicted for us in the Sermon on the Mount and in other records. It is a teaching remarkable for its unity. It deals with human life and its conditions from a definite point of view. It starts from a belief in

¹ Mt. vii. 1, 2.

² *Ibid.*

³ Mt. vii. 3-5.

God as the Father of mankind. "If God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things before you ask him."¹ Mankind is dependent upon God, whose relations to them are those of a loving Father, and therefore it is essential to their well-being that they should live in accordance with God's will. God's will is love and righteousness, that men should love Him and reveal that love by righteousness and love for their fellow-men.

The result of this teaching is that if it be rightly apprehended, the good life is an inspiration and not a burden. If the love of God and men is once kindled in our heart, we do all that we ought towards God and men alike as the natural outcome of what we are. All the strength of the purest emotion is enlisted on the side of righteousness, and as this means the satisfaction of what is best in us, we in this way attain the end of our being.

There are two ways, two paths for man. The one is the way of the world, the other is the way of life. The one means making worldly success the motive of your life, whatever form it may take for you, and pursuing after that with anxious care. It seems attractive, but it means ultimately failure. The other means caring for the things of God and His righteousness. It is the latter which brings man his highest good. The worldly man and the righteous man may pursue the same calling. Both alike may be statesmen, or merchants, or soldiers: it is their motive and their method which will be different.

Now, the characteristic of our Lord's teaching is that He bases His morality throughout on these principles. Everything is ultimately referred to this one principle, the love of God and man, so that rules and laws and commandments become unnecessary. The Christian no longer requires directions for each particular action, his heart and his conscience will be better than all such rules. No doubt experience, wisdom, and knowledge should be added, and without them mistakes will be made. But the point is that

¹ Mt. vi. 30-32.

if the right fundamental principle be secured, if the heart be pure and the eye be single, the details will be quickly learnt.

Such is the moral teaching of Jesus. There are two further questions which have been raised, the one as to its authenticity, the other as to its originality. It might seem at first sight superfluous to discuss the first question. But it has been maintained that this teaching represents not so much what our Lord taught as what the Church devised for the instruction of its members. Now, it may be recognized (as we have seen) that this may possibly be true of the codification of these principles which we have in St. Matthew's Gospel, and that the Sermon on the Mount may in that sense be the work of the nascent Church. That is, however, a very different thing from thinking that the subject-matter does not come from our Lord. Yet it is maintained that at any rate large sections of the sermon are not genuine. There is, I believe, very little to support such a contention. It must be noticed in the first place that a large part of the teaching occurs elsewhere in the Gospel and in other forms. We learn the same things in St. Luke and in St. Mark. We find it in parables, in incident, in isolated sayings. Then we notice further that, although the Sermon on the Mount may have been constructed by putting together material coming from different sources and spoken on different occasions in our Lord's ministry, yet there is a remarkable homogeneity about it. We have analyzed its fundamental characteristics. We find that they permeate the whole body of the teaching. Surely there could not be this sort of uniformity if much of it were unauthentic.

Or compare it with the teaching reported in St. Mark. This is much more fragmentary in character, but it will be found to cover a great deal of the same ground. It often appears not as definite doctrinal teaching, but in the form of apparently casual remarks forming part of a narrative. But if we analyze the principles implied in the teaching in St. Mark, we shall find them to be the same as those of the sermon. There is the same teaching of the love of God and man, of marriage and divorce, of riches and poverty.

The duty of self-sacrifice, humility, and self-abnegation are emphasized. Prayer, forgiveness, the care for the things of God, are all enjoined. There is the same dislike of ceremonialism. What is remarkable about the Gospel as contained in St. Mark is that, although seemingly so fragmentary, it is really extraordinarily complete and that, although there is much less detail, much less amplification, much less system, it teaches us just the same view of Christ's teaching that the Sermon on the Mount does. I do not feel any doubt that in every substantial and important point we have the genuine teaching of our Lord.

But how far is this teaching original? Parallels to much that is contained in it have been found in many places: in Plato, in the Stoics, in Confucianism, in Buddhism. If the moral principles that underlie it are really universal, it is, of course, quite natural that there should be much resemblance between what Christ came to teach and the highest attainments of human thinkers. Christianity could not appeal to us as true unless it harmonized with, even if it transcended, human experience. But having admitted the resemblance, the difference is real and striking. Neither Platonism nor Stoicism nor Confucianism nor Buddhism are Christianity. There are vast differences between it and them, and no one of them seriously claims to give us a system of life and morality suitable to the present day. If Christian morality is thought to be superseded, it is not by them.

It is true also that (as we have seen) parallels to the teaching of our Lord are found elsewhere in Judaism. It has its roots in the Old Testament. There are sayings of the Rabbis which teach the same lessons. It is possible (but hardly probable) that fragments of Rabbinical teaching have even crept into the Gospel. But none of these things interfere with the profound originality of the whole conception. As Renan says, the teaching looks very different when we see it in the Gospels. That is because here it is part of an harmonious principle. It is not this or that ethical rule that forms the essence or causes the originality of our Lord's teaching, but the new point of view—fundamentally true and comprehensive. Christian morality

excels other systems of morality, not because it gives new rules of conduct, but because it places all conduct on a fundamentally right principle.

The close of the nineteenth century was signalized by a determined attempt to challenge the supremacy of the Christian moral system. It is associated with the name of Nietzsche, perhaps somewhat unfairly. At any rate, he has supplied in the expression "Will to Power" the phrase which perhaps best sums up its characteristics. Christianity is described as a slave morality. The specifically Christian virtues of humility, self-sacrifice, self-abnegation are condemned. Asceticism in all its forms is looked upon as damaging to human life. The ideal man is not the man who is good to others, but good to himself, the man who can assert himself, who transcends others not in goodness, but in power, who, regardless of the rights of others, and indifferent to any call of duty, fashions for himself his own career, and wins for himself what the world has to give. Not love but power is the highest motive of action.

It is possible that to a certain extent what Nietzsche revolted from was not Christianity, but certain incomplete and one-sided representations of Christianity. Asceticism is not Christianity. Every Christian must be prepared for the most extreme self-sacrifice, just as every patriot must be ready to die on the field of battle, but self-sacrifice is not Christianity any more than it is patriotism. The Christian is humble and practises self-abnegation, not because he is timid or servile, but because he must respect the rights and feelings and position of others. There are often occasions when self-assertion is incumbent on him. The mistake has come from making subordinate manifestations a substitute for what is supreme. The fundamental principle of Christianity is righteousness, and love for our fellow-men. This may imply asceticism, self-sacrifice, and humility; but they are only ways of self-assertion.

But, of course, the will to power is fundamentally opposed to this. For it means the assertion of your own will without regard to right or justice. It is maintained that as the evolution of the human race has come by the survival of the fittest, it is not the man who bends and yields, but the man

who asserts himself who will survive, and therefore nature demands the strong man, or the superman (as Nietzsche calls him), the man who is too great to care for restraint.

The argument really begs the question. Evolution teaches the survival of what is adapted to the environment, and the real question is, what is the nature of our environment? If the world be the expression of the will of God and God be righteous, then our environment is one in which the righteous will survive. The evolution of the human race has been a development of morality which seems to show that the environment to which men have adapted themselves is moral. That has also been human experience. Ever since the Greek chorus moralized on those who trampled on the altar of justice and the psalmist spoke of the downfall of the proud, it has been the ultimate experience of mankind that the world is governed by moral principles. If this be true, the superman of the modern world will go the way of the proud and impious of the tragedian and of the psalmist. Whether the events of the twentieth century have supported the moral revolt of the nineteenth, time must judge.

CHAPTER VI

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

WE are told by St. Mark that the beginning of Jesus' teaching was the kingdom of God. "And after John was cast into prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of God: The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe in the Gospel."¹ When He ate the Last Supper with His disciples He said: "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."² Throughout His ministry it appears to have been the expression under which most commonly He summed up the contents and purpose of His teaching. What did the kingdom of God, or (as St. Matthew puts it, using a conventional paraphrase) the kingdom of heaven, mean?

I

The expression is taken from popular religious phraseology. Joseph of Arimathea is spoken of as "looking for the kingdom of God."³ The disciples ask our Lord after the Resurrection: "Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"⁴ As He enters Jerusalem before His crucifixion the people greet Him with the cry: "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David."⁵ It would not, I think, be any exaggeration to say that all the hopes and expectations of the Jewish people, of every sect and class, were expressed by this word, the "kingdom." It summed up for them all that Israel had waited for through all the centuries. It was the note of every great movement among the people. When, therefore, the call sounded, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," it inevitably aroused

¹ Mk. i. 14, 15.

² Mk. xiv. 25.

³ Mk. xv. 43.

⁴ Acts i. 6.

⁵ Mk. xi. 10.

a stir throughout the country. But what did the people expect? And what did Jesus mean?

The root of the idea goes back to the Old Testament. It is not the least remarkable characteristic of the people of Israel that they never lost their hope of a great destiny for the nation, and that, however terrible might be the misfortunes that they had to endure, their faith in their future was never extinguished. From quite an early time they looked forward to the revival of the kingdom of David. Once, under a ruler whose personal character exhibited all those traits which might arouse hero-worship, Israel had been a powerful military monarchy. The rule of David had extended from the frontiers of Egypt to the River Euphrates, and Jerusalem had become one of the important cities of the world. The greatness was transitory, but it created an ideal, and the hope of the kingdom of David never failed. "Then shall there enter in," said Jeremiah, "by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses."¹ Whatever might be the misfortunes of Israel this hope always remained in some form or other. It encouraged the endurance and aroused the aspirations of the nation.

But there was another ideal which superseded or transformed the national hopes, the sovereignty of God. Two great ideas were, in the religion of Israel, associated with Jehovah, divine sovereignty and righteousness, testified to alike by nature and by human society. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork."² "The Lord hath established his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all."³ "All thy works shall give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."⁴ Everywhere God was supreme. He ruled over the world of nature and would extend His sway over mankind, and the essence of his rule was righteousness.

These conceptions had a powerful influence on the ideal of

¹ Jer. xxii. 4.

² Ps. ciii. 19.

³ Ps. xix. 1.

⁴ Ps. cxlv. 10-13.

Israel. The hope of a Davidic kingdom became the hope also of a righteous kingdom: "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment."¹ "I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David my servant . . . strong is thy hand and high is thy right hand. Righteousness and judgment are the foundations of thy throne. Mercy and truth go before thy face."² The future kingdom is to be a righteous kingdom.

But there is another line of thought that we find running through the history of Israel. If the kingdom was to be a perfectly righteous kingdom, could any earthly king satisfy the condition? Even at the first, the kingly ideal is looked upon as one really inconsistent with the Divine purpose of the nation. It was remembered that there had been a time when there was no king in Israel. It was remembered how Samuel the prophet had warned the people of the evil of kingly rule. "The Lord their God was their king." So at a later period the future of Israel became associated among many of the devout, not with an earthly kingdom, but with the establishment of the theocracy. "The Holy One of Israel is our king."³ What men looked forward to was the renewal of the covenant, a change of heart, a new law, the restoration of divine grace.

God might be the king of Israel; but His sway was not acknowledged through the whole earth. So the further idea grew up of a day when He would assert His authority over all mankind and establish His kingdom. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely."⁴ "It shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the people, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting place shall be glorious."⁵ With this day will come not only righteousness, but happiness. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. . . . Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."⁶

¹ Is. xxxii. 1.

³ Ps. lxxxix. 18.

⁵ Is. xi. 10.

² Ps. lxxxix. 3, 13, 14.

⁴ Is. iv. 2.

⁶ Is. lxv. 17, 18.

The latest development in the Old Testament of these ideas is presented to us by the Book of Daniel. As in other books of the Maccabaeian period, all reference to the house of David is absent, but the idea of the divine kingdom is prominent. When the succession of the kingdoms of the world is depicted in the image of gold and silver, of brass and iron, the stone which destroys them and becomes a great mountain represents the kingdom of God. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people: but it shall break in pieces all those kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."¹ And in the vision of the Ancient of Days we are told how "the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."²

To the conceptions of the older prophets the circumstances of the Maccabaeian period have added a new idea, of which there had been intimations perhaps before, but which here appears for the first time quite explicitly. In old days the future of Israel had been the only problem, the individual was not considered. But gradually the religious development and the eventful history of the days since the exile had made religion more personal. It became no longer merely the fate of the nation, but that of the individual that was a matter of moment. When, in the days of persecution, the faithful adherent of the law had died for his faith, it was felt that a future that did not give to such a due reward was inadequate. To the ideas of the kingdom and of the judgment, is added that of the Resurrection. Deliverance is for everyone whose name is written in the book of life, but for them alone: "And many of them that sleep in the dust shall arise, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."³

From this time onwards all these varied hopes continued to prevail in Israel, interpreted in many different ways. To what extent the expression "The kingdom," "The

¹ Dan. ii. 44.

² Dan. vii. 27.

³ Dan. xii. 2.

kingdom of God," or "The kingdom of heaven" was in popular use is a matter of discussion. It has been held that in this as in other cases Jesus had adopted an Old Testament phrase and given it a distinction and importance which it had not possessed before. That may be so, but I doubt it. It was a Biblical term. It certainly was used; and it seems to me more probable that it was the form in which the ideals of the nation were normally expressed.

II

In what way did the Jews think of the kingdom? No doubt to the vast majority, and especially to the people of Galilee, it presented itself in a crude and worldly form. It meant the restoration of Jewish independence. Under the chosen ruler the people would revolt from the Romans; they would restore again the kingdom to Israel; they would be freed from alien rule and alien tax-gatherers. Instead of being the servants of the Gentiles, they would be their masters. It was a dream such as this which, at the time of the enrolment, had stirred Judas of Gamala to found the sect of the Galilaeans. It was this ideal which had stirred up so many revolts, and which finally caused the whole nation to wreck themselves in a hopeless, if heroic, contest with the military power of Rome.

But this ideal of a temporal sovereignty might be held also in a lofty and elevated form, so that the restored kingdom might mean the fulfilment of the highest ideals of the old Israel. In this form it presents itself to us in the Psalms of Solomon, an apocryphal collection belonging to the years that followed on Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem. It mourns over the fall of the city and exults over the death of the conqueror, an event which is described in picturesque language inspired by national hatred. The following passage represents the most brilliant description of the national hope: "But as for us, we will hope in God, our Saviour, for the might of our God endureth to everlasting with mercy. And the kingdom of our God is unto everlasting over the heathen in judgment. Thou, O Lord, didst choose David to be king over Israel, and didst swear unto

him touching his seed for ever, that his kingdom should not fail before thee." The characteristics of this kingdom, a kingdom under a son of David, are to be holiness and righteousness. Jerusalem is to be purified. The ungodly nations are to be destroyed. "He shall gather together a holy people whom he shall rule in righteousness, and shall judge the tribes of the people that hath been sanctified by the Lord his God. And he shall not suffer iniquity to lodge in their midst; and none that knoweth wickedness shall dwell with them. He shall purge Jerusalem and make it holy, even as it was in the days of old. So that the nations may come from the ends of the earth to see his glory, bringing as gifts her sons that had fainted. And may see the glory of the Lord, wherewith God hath glorified her." All this will come because God is king of Israel. "The Lord, he is our king from henceforth and even for evermore."¹

But it had long been apparent to the wiser that any fulfilment of the hopes of Israel which rested on worldly sovereignty in any form was not likely to be attained. Many had even come to hope that it never would be attained. The military monarchy of the Maccabees, after the first period of enthusiasm and high ideals was over, had been an outrage on the religious sense of the nation. No restoration of this must come. How, then, were the hopes of Israel to be fulfilled? There were many passages of the Old Testament which spoke of the "day," of the culmination of this period of the world's history, of the coming of God to judge the earth. He himself would intervene, or sometimes this judgment of God was imagined as exercised for Him by a supernatural being who represented Him and who as having the divine Spirit poured out on Him is called the Anointed or the Messiah.

This expectation, as it was largely the product of the imagination, might be held in a great variety of forms, but there were certain features which were common if not universal. It was believed that the present aeon or period in the world's history was swiftly drawing to its close. The wickedness and faithlessness which prevailed were a sign that the judgment was at hand. But before the end

¹ *Psalms of Solomon*, xvii.

came there would be worse evils which were sometimes described as the birth pangs or woes of the Messiah, the final effort of the powers of evil to assert themselves, the great outburst of wickedness before it should be destroyed. Then would appear the Messiah or the Anointed One. He would judge the world and sweep away all wickedness and evil. The old order would come to an end. The new world would begin.

The future might be imagined in various ways. All evil being destroyed, the Messiah might take away all those that were true to Him to His heavenly abode, and there God's sovereignty would be supreme. Or it might be held (as was, in fact, often the case) that He would establish on earth a kingdom which should last a thousand years, when the redeemed would enjoy every form of human happiness, often described in most materialistic language. Then, at the end of the thousand years, would come the second resurrection, and the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth. This double picture of an earthly kingdom of the Messiah, followed after a long period by a heavenly kingdom, really arose from the desire to reconcile the two different forms of expectation, the one looking forward to an earthly Messianic kingdom, the other to a future life in heaven.

It is not necessary to find any coherency or consistency in these dreams. The importance for us is that the whole action is looked upon as something supernatural and catastrophic. No help seemed possible through any ordinary human channels, the forces of evil were too powerful. But God would avenge His people. Suddenly the Messiah would appear from heaven. He would destroy all the forces of evil and establish a reign of righteousness. "He will cause the sinners to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the earth, and those that have led the world astray. With chains shall they be bound, and in their assemblage-place of destruction shall they be imprisoned, and all their works vanish from the face of the earth, and from thenceforth there shall be nothing corruptible."¹ And here is an account of the future kingdom: "In that day mine Elect One shall

¹ *The Book of Enoch* (ed. Charles), lxix. 27, 28.

sit on the throne of glory and shall try their works, and their places of rest shall be innumerable. And their souls shall grow strong within them, when they see mine elect ones and those who have called upon my glorious name: Then will I cause mine Elect One to dwell among them. And I will transform the heaven and make it an eternal blessing and light, and I will transform the earth and make it a blessing: and I will cause mine elect ones to dwell upon it, but the sinners and evil-doers shall not set foot thereon. For I have provided and satisfied with peace my righteous ones and have caused them to dwell before me."¹

One further point must be noticed. As is usual in all such imaginations concerning the future, much is expressed in symbolical language, and it is hardly possible to know where the symbolism ends and the literal presentation begins. No one doubts that the four beasts and the great image of the Book of Daniel are symbolical; how far was the vision of the Ancient of Days intended to be more than a pictorial representation of spiritual truths? Some of the greatest errors in theology have come from the literal and dogmatic interpretation of what was intended to be poetical.

There was a third way besides the expectation of a great temporal kingdom or the apocalyptic dream of a new earth in which the kingdom of heaven and the hope of Israel were interpreted. The normal meaning of the kingdom of God is, in Aramaic, the sovereignty or rule of God—that is, His divine rule on the earth.² Under the Rabbis this phrase was largely used to mean the acceptance by Israel of the rule of God over them. "Before our father Abraham came into the world, God was, as it were, only the king of heaven; but when Abraham came he made Him to be king over heaven and earth."³ At the Red Sea and at Sinai Israel gave allegiance to this sovereignty of God. "The proselyte who adopts the law takes upon himself the sovereignty of heaven."⁴ To read the Shema was to take upon

¹ *Book of Enoch*, xlv. 3-6.

² On this conception see Dalman, *The Words of Jesus* (English Translation, Edinburgh, 1902), p. 91 ff.

³ Quoted by Dalman, p. 96, from Siphre Dt., 113 (Fr. 134^b).

⁴ Simeon ben Lakish (c. A.D. 260). See Dalman, p. 97.

oneself the yoke of the sovereignty of God. The sovereignty of God belongs therefore to the current age. It is as yet acknowledged only by Israel. It is limited by the fact that the peoples of the world do not acknowledge this divine sovereignty. The final consummation will only come when all idolatrous worship shall be abolished and all mankind shall acknowledge the rule of God: "Then shall God alone be absolute in all the world, and His sovereignty will endure for ever and ever."¹

The kingdom of heaven may thus mean the acceptance of God as your sovereign to whom you personally owe allegiance, as one to whom you are responsible for your conduct on earth. It may therefore be, at any rate to a considerable extent, independent of any question of earthly sovereignty and dominion. It would mean, therefore, the theocracy. It meant obedience to the law. Thus "the kingdom" was possible under very varied earthly conditions. Many of the Chasidim in the days of the Maccabees seem to have been quite reconciled to foreign domination, provided they were allowed the free exercise of their religion. Many Jews of the Dispersion did not feel their position in foreign lands inconsistent with the claims of their religion, provided nothing was done to prevent them from keeping the law. The restoration of Israel was perhaps never quite forgotten by any, but if the recognition of God's sovereignty was attained, all that was essential would be secured.

Such were the different forms which the expectation of the kingdom might assume among the Jews. How far any one of them was held and in what circles when Jesus preached is a more difficult enquiry. That in Galilee, as has been said, for the great mass of the people the kingdom meant the restoration of temporal sovereignty there can be little doubt. This was always hoped for, but at the time of our Lord's ministry it would not be held with such intensity as it had been, because Herodian rule, however unsatisfactory, did remove some causes of friction. But what form did the hope of Simeon take, "who looked for the consolation of Israel"?² or of Anna the prophetess, "who spake of him to

¹ Dalman, p. 99, from *Mechilta* (ed. Friedmann), 56^a.

² Lk. ii. 25.

all those who looked for the redemption of Jerusalem"?¹ or of Joseph of Arimathea "who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God?"² Was it temporal rule? or the apocalyptic crisis? or the extension of the theocracy throughout the world? We have not really adequate evidence, but my own opinion would be that at this time the apocalyptic hopes were somewhat in abeyance. They had been strong in the days of the Maccabees, they became strong again after the fall of Jerusalem. The expectation also of the extension of the divine sovereignty of God throughout the world by the nations acknowledging His Law—that is, the conception of the universality of God's will without sovereign power for the people of Israel, was one which was more natural to Rabbinism when it became organized after the fall of Jerusalem. Our evidence for it is for the most part late, yet it is the development of a thought which had always existed in Israel. The mass of the people would hope for temporal rule, and it was that that was ultimately the motive power of the great revolt. The higher minds would hold that expectation in the elevated form of the Psalms of Solomon. Some few, perhaps, placed their hopes for the future in the triumph of divine law and righteousness.

III

It is clear, then, that when Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God he was making use of a well-known phrase. It came directly from the Old Testament. It was probably the word which would best express the ideals of the day, and it was part of the recognized religious phraseology. Everyone hoped for the kingdom.

But in what sense did Jesus Himself use the phrase? On this point there have been differences of opinion. Some would interpret it in a purely apocalyptic sense. Jesus thought that He would shortly come as the Messiah from heaven, and would destroy all evil from the world and establish His kingdom. It has been maintained by others that the kingdom that He spoke of is something present, that it did not mean any form of external or worldly rule,

¹ Lk. ii. 38.

² Mk. xv. 43.

but the divine sovereignty established in the hearts of men, and the overthrow in that way of the kingdom of evil. A third explanation would be that the kingdom of God meant the Christian Church. On one point almost all are agreed, that Jesus had definitely repudiated the idea of any earthly kingdom established by earthly means. The popular expectations of the people of Galilee he condemned as mistaken and wrong.

The difficulty of deciding in what sense Jesus used the term is increased by uncertainty or supposed uncertainty as to the authenticity of the words of the Gospel. It is the custom of many who write on these things to maintain that any recorded saying of our Lord which conflicts with their particular view represents the thought of a later time. The method is a simple and easy way of evading difficulties, but as, unfortunately, there is no agreement as to which are the spurious sayings, the uncertainty must remain. There are some theologians who would eliminate all passages which demand an eschatological explanation, others would eliminate the Church, others think that references to the kingdom of God established in men's hearts represent an elaboration of later times. How arbitrary all this is is shown by a statement that I read lately to the effect that a passage can only be genuine if it be given a particular meaning. Clearly such speculation is much too subjective. There is no solid basis. The proper method must be to examine all the instances recorded of the use of the expression, to ask what they mean, to see whether they can be brought under one general conception, to consider whether they are inconsistent with one another, and to ask whether our interpretation harmonizes with the rest of our Lord's teaching. Only after we have done that may we eliminate any incongruous passages as unauthentic.

It is clear that this problem of the kingdom was one which caused much questioning. Jesus had said that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. But when would it come? And how would it come? We are told on one occasion that certain Pharisees asked "when the kingdom of God cometh." And it must have been in answer to such questions that the many parables which begin by reference to the kingdom

were spoken. It was shortly after the first serious breach between Jesus and the ecclesiastical authorities, and just after the appointment of the Twelve, that we find Him giving definite instruction on this subject and in the form of parables. How many parables he delivered on this occasion we cannot say. St. Matthew (as is usual with him) takes the opportunity of bringing together several parables from different sources, and it is possible that St. Mark may have done the same, but even if this were so, the fact that all these parables may not have been spoken at the same time does not necessarily take away from their authenticity.¹

Why did our Lord speak in parables? The obvious answer to give is, because of the attractiveness of such a method of exposition. People would readily come to hear one whose discourse was interesting and attractive and appealed to their imagination. But a different and deeper reason is given in the Gospel. Jesus, we are told, said: "Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them."² These words have caused great difficulties, and their authenticity is now widely denied. It is said that not only this statement but the explanations which are given of the parables are the work of the early Church, if not of the Evangelist himself. It is maintained that the parables are quite easy to understand, and that it is only the misconception of their meaning at a later date which led to the production of the elaborate and erroneous systems of interpretation which are given us. It is unfortunate that when we turn to the explanations given by these modern commentators we find that they differ among themselves as to what the parables do mean, and this will, I am afraid, prevent us from accepting the statement that they are quite easy without some qualification.

I would ask you to consider for a moment the circumstances under which the parable of the sower was spoken. It was clearly intended to reveal the mystery of the kingdom. The expectations which Jesus aroused by His proclamation,

¹ Mk. iv. 1-34; Mt. xiii. 1-53.

² Mk. iv. 11, 12.

by His teaching, by His personality, by His miracles, had created a great stir among the people. His apparent unorthodoxy must have accentuated the perplexity. A great crowd, mostly of common people, had collected together anxious for explanations, and they hear a story of a man going out to sow seed. What bewilderment this must have caused! It was not in the least what they wanted or expected. They wanted to know when and how the kingdom would come. Was Jesus shortly going to lead them against the Romans? It was difficult to see how this story could answer their questions.

Now, to the early Church there would have been little difficulty. The preaching of the Word was something they could understand. It was going on continually. To them the meaning of the parable would have been clear. But to the multitude by the sea, eager to hear of a real kingdom being established, it meant nothing, unless there were some of real spiritual understanding. They were listening to a pleasing but enigmatical story.

But this and other parables, spoken either then or at a later time, taught just what was necessary. You ask: What is the kingdom? When will it come? The kingdom of heaven is now come, it is indeed here, but you are not able to see or understand. It is the word that is spoken. It is the message that I am giving. It does not come with power or might. It is no great spectacular event. It is like seed, which only brings forth fruit if it fall on good ground. The coming of the kingdom depends upon the growth of the Word of God in men's hearts, and as there are many in whom it does not bring forth fruit, the kingdom cannot come speedily. The growth of the kingdom is a slow and secret process; it is like seed growing secretly. What happens we cannot see, but ultimately the plant springs up and flowers and produces its seed, and so the consummation is reached. Its beginnings are very small, but little by little it will become great and spread throughout the world as the small seed becomes the great tree. The kingdom is the word of God. It is God's secret process working through a long period of time. It is the little community growing into a great Church.

Exactly the same teaching is given us in the series of parables added by St. Matthew. What more appropriate parable to describe the growth of Christianity in the world than the leaven leavening the dough? What better parables could there be to tell us that the kingdom of heaven is something which is not primarily to make a show in the world, but is a personal possession of unlimited value, than the treasure hidden in the field and the pearl of great price? To obtain these it is worth while to give up everything.

Two more parables put before us other aspects of the kingdom. Will there be a time in this world when all men will do righteously? Will the kingdom be a place where there are no traitors or disloyal persons? That is not what we are to expect. Just as in a field you cannot separate the wheat from the tares, just as if you cast a net into the sea it will be filled with fishes good and bad, so in the world the sons of the kingdom will have to live side by side with the sons of the devil. It is only at the end of all things that the final establishment of the kingdom will take place. Then good and evil will be separated. The tares will be burnt. The bad fish will be cast away. So the angels will come and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and cast them into the furnace of fire, but the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

If we sum up the meaning of the kingdom of God as presented in these parables, there seem to be three conceptions, not entirely separate from one another, but merging in one another. The first is that the kingdom means a principle of life and conduct in men's hearts. As such, it is not something which is to come in outward show and splendour, but something which is already here. It is a process which is now working, not a new revelation to come from heaven. So it might be described as Christianity or the Christian dispensation, the new state of things inaugurated by the preaching of Jesus. It has often, secondly, been interpreted as the Christian Church. That is, I believe, too narrow a meaning. It would be better to say that it is Christianity looked on as a great power or process working in the world, of which process the Christian Church is the definitely visible aspect. But this does not exhaust the

thought. There is a third point of view. The kingdom ultimately will be the final consummation of all things.

It has been maintained that here we have three different meanings of the kingdom, not merely different aspects of one idea, but different interpretations belonging to different times and circles of thought. All are more or less inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus, and belong to a later period in the Christian Church. Now, I think that you will admit that there is a good deal of difficulty in taking this view about teaching based upon parables which appear to represent the most individual and personal utterances of Jesus. The parables are a part of the Gospel narrative which it is most difficult, on literary grounds, to eliminate. In order, however, to investigate the problem fully, I propose next to examine the rest of the evidence of the Gospels bearing on the kingdom, then to consider how far these different aspects can be looked at as the working out of one idea, and finally to ask whether there is anything in the statement that they are impossible in the mouth of Jesus.

IV

When our Lord is accused by the Pharisees of casting out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, He asks if Satan be divided against himself how his kingdom will stand. And then He adds, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you."¹ Here the conception seems clear. There is a kingdom of evil, the working of which is revealed in all the sin and misery of the world. If a power has now been revealed in the world which is able to overcome these powers of evil, it means that God's sovereignty is already being asserted, and that therefore in some sense, although not perhaps in its most complete manifestation, the kingdom of God has come.

Again, when our Lord is speaking of John the Baptist, He says: "Verily I say unto you, there is not among those born of woman a greater than John the Baptist. But he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom

¹ Lk. xi. 20.

of heaven suffereth violence, and violent persons ravage it. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."¹ The obvious meaning of this passage seems clear. There are two dispensations. The one is that of the law and the prophets. This has had its consummation in John, who was more than a prophet because he was, in fact, the herald of a new order. Then begins a new dispensation inaugurated by Jesus Himself, the kingdom of heaven, and in it God's rule or sovereignty asserts itself in a wholly new way.

Once when Jesus has been speaking of the futility of ordinary worldly aspirations, he adds, "Seek ye his kingdom and these things shall be added unto you,"² and this is explained by St. Matthew, "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness."³ Here seeking the kingdom means adopting a certain aim in life. The message that Jesus has to give is that God's kingdom is what we are to strive for, and the explanation is righteousness. God's kingdom means living in accordance with God's law of righteousness.

A rich young man came to our Lord and said: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" After answering his question Jesus said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."⁴ The comment on this is: "Then who can be saved?" The kingdom seems here to be used in an eschatological sense, not, however, of the sudden appearance of the Son of man to judgment, but simply of "eternal life."

"It is better," said Jesus, "to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."⁵ This has been explained in the preceding verse as "entering into life," and the life is one which is not confined to life hereafter. The expression to "enter into the kingdom of heaven" is thus often used of "salvation." The language in some cases seems to harmonize best with the life here, sometimes with the life hereafter. It is not, indeed, necessary to distinguish too carefully the two ideas. Life

¹ From *The Discourses*, Mt. xi. 11-13; cf. Lk. xvi. 16.

² Lk. xii. 31.

³ Mt. vi. 33.

⁴ Mk. x. 17-31.

⁵ Mk. ix. 47; Mt. xviii. 9.

begins here because to live in accordance with God's will is the true life, and life hereafter is but the continuation, the fulfilment and the consummation of that life.

We are told that once the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked him "when the kingdom of God cometh."¹ Their expectations may have been of an eschatological character, or they may have expected the establishment of an earthly monarchy and the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. The reply that Jesus gives implies that all such expectations are erroneous, and based on an imperfect conception of God's purpose. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." There will be no spectacular and dramatic action. In fact, the kingdom of God is already here in your midst.

Now, what is the conception underlying all these varied usages? St. Matthew, if not our Lord Himself, has given us an explanation. In the Lord's Prayer we are bidden to pray, "Thy kingdom come," and immediately afterwards in the version in the first Gospel are the words "Thy will be done."² The kingdom of God is God's sovereignty or rule, and that means the fulfilment of His will. This conception will embrace and harmonize all the varied uses which have been described. Jesus came to establish a kingdom. In order to do so, His plan was to teach people to live in accordance with God's will. That is why He was the preacher of righteousness, that is why He laid down a rule of life lofty and exacting, and yet such that He might describe His yoke as easy. So soon as this preaching begins, the kingdom of God begins—that is to say, the assertion of God's sovereignty against the kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of evil. In this way there is established a new dispensation which succeeds to the old and therefore will take its place as the sphere of God's sovereignty. Into this kingdom only those may come who have acknowledged God's sway in their hearts. All such may be said to have life. But the life here is only the beginning of a life which is to last for all eternity. The kingdom here is something imperfect and incomplete. There will be a time at the end of all things when God's sovereignty will be universally estab-

¹ Lk. xvii. 20.

² Mt. vi. 10.

lished and all who have fulfilled God's will will inherit eternal life.

The kingdom, then, meant what we call Christianity or the Christian dispensation, or in some of its aspects the Christian Church. When, then, our Lord began His ministry by saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand, repent and believe the Gospel," He was using language which might have different meanings for different persons. Some might think: "At last the yoke of the Gentile will be cast off. The kingdom of our father David will be established. The chosen people will once more be free and independent in their own land and will triumph over the Gentiles. Jerusalem will be the centre of the whole earth." Others might think: "The day of the Lord is at hand. The Son of man will come to judgment. A new heaven and a new earth will be established. All that is evil will be condemned and cast into Gehenna, the rich and wealthy kings of the earth, all those who are the elect, for whom it is prepared, will enter into the heavenly kingdom where God will reign with His saints." But Jesus did not mean any of these things. He meant: "I am come to teach you to fulfil God's will. I am come to teach you the true righteousness. I will sow in your heart the word of God. I am come to destroy the kingdom of evil, not with earthly might, but in the spirit of God. This is the kingdom which God has prepared for you from the foundation of the world. It will not come suddenly, but slowly. Its growth will not be conspicuous. It will permeate the world as the leaven, but gradually it will become a force and power beneficent throughout the whole earth."

V

It has been thought that the conception of the kingdom of God which has just been sketched is not possible as part of the teaching of our Lord, but that it represents the developed conception of the Christian Church. Jesus' own conception of the kingdom was, it is maintained, purely apocalyptic; He expected, it is said, the speedy coming of the day of the Lord. At first He thought that He would come as the Son of God in His own life time. Then, when in that

He was disappointed, He began to realize His death must come first, but after His death He would come again soon as the Son of man to judge the world and establish His kingdom. It was the continued failure of the Parousia which created Christianity. It is inconceivable, it is said, that Jesus should have had such far-reaching views, and they must have been the creation of the Christian Church. This criticism demands some consideration.

What is the result of the examination of the evidence? The account which I have given of our Lord's teaching is put together almost entirely from what are generally held to be the earliest portions of the Gospel narrative. It does not, so far as documents can help us, represent a later development. Parables and sayings of our Lord which represent the kingdom as present, as a spiritual process, as the Gospel dispensation, almost as the Church, occur both in St. Mark's Gospel and in *The Discourses*, and it is only by explaining away the obvious meaning of these passages or by maintaining in quite an arbitrary way that they are unauthentic that any other theory can be maintained. The exposition that I have given rests on a sound critical and exegetical basis.

It will be convenient next to examine three passages in which a purely apocalyptic meaning is claimed for "the kingdom." The first is one which tells us of the coming of the kingdom of God with power. Shortly before the Transfiguration Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you that there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God coming with power."¹ That is how the passage is given in St. Mark. In St. Matthew it is given a more definite eschatological turn by substituting the words "until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." We know that among some, at any rate, in the Apostolic age, the Parousia was believed to be close at hand, and such a belief has often prevailed at subsequent periods in Christian history. This alteration suggests, then, that there was a tendency to modify the words of our Lord in an eschatological sense. Now it is maintained that here we have a definite prophecy of the nearness of the Parousia.

¹ Mk. ix. 1; Mt. xvi. 28.

There is, however, nothing in the words themselves to compel such an interpretation. The kingdom of God coming with power might be equally well exhibited by the descent of the Holy Ghost, by the power of the Spirit in the Church, and by the triumphant march of Christianity through the world. All these interpretations would harmonize with the conception of the kingdom put before us in the parables and taught elsewhere in St. Mark.

A second instance is in the words used at the Last Supper: "Verily I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."¹ It is maintained that these words mean that there was a conviction in the mind of Jesus that the kingdom of God in an eschatological sense would shortly be established. But the words are surely intended to be interpreted in a purely figurative manner. We know that, according to one strain of Jewish expectation, the Messianic kingdom was looked forward to as a time of materialistic, sometimes grossly materialistic, enjoyment, and, in particular, that it was spoken of in terms of eating and drinking. Jesus occasionally adopts this type of language, as when he says that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.² The kingdom is represented as a great banquet. Now, no one but the Chiliasts of the early Church and their even less intelligent imitators take such words as these in their literal signification, and clearly the words of the Lord, so far as speaking of the Messianic banquet, would not be so taken; why, then, should the remainder of the verse be held to be literal? The whole passage is figurative. Jesus is taking a solemn farewell of His disciples. His earthly life is over. He will meet them again when with Him they share in the joys of the heavenly kingdom in its final consummation which is eternal life. Here, also, the kingdom must be interpreted as in other places in St. Mark's Gospel.

It is significant that in *The Discourses* there is no passage to be interpreted in a purely eschatological sense. The only other that I think need concern us comes from St. Luke's account of the Last Supper: "But ye are they

¹ Mk. xiv. 25.

² Mt. viii. 11.

which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."¹ It might be possible (as any critic would do who did not like the passage) to assert that this as being inserted by St. Luke came from a later source. But that is not necessary. There is no reason for thinking it not genuine. St. Luke had, if not a second history of the Passion and Crucifixion, at any rate much fuller information, probably correct, about it. This passage harmonizes with the words following the institution and should be interpreted in the same way. There can be no doubt that here as elsewhere Jesus uses language such as was common in Jewish expectation. Even by the Jew it was probably regarded as figurative and symbolical. Jesus, too, used it in that way, and a passage like this must be interpreted in harmony with the rest of His teaching.

Now let us ask what is implied in the suggestion that an insight into the future of the Christian community would not have been possible for our Lord. It is maintained, I suppose, that so narrow and limited were His ideals that He could not have thought of the Christian community as a great tree which filled all the earth, or that He had never pictured to Himself a new world in which good and evil were mingled, and that He had no insight into the power of God as working in the world. Why was not this possible? Jesus, we know, looked upon Himself as fulfilling all the expectations of the Old Testament, but He always interpreted them in their most spiritual meaning. In Him the hopes of Israel attained their fruition. Such hopes might be and had been interpreted in very crude and worldly ways, but if anyone read the Old Testament with spiritual insight there could be no doubt what it had taught. The kingdom there, too, always meant the sovereignty of God, and therefore righteousness. In all ages there had been those who had recognized this, but the needs and circumstances of the times were such that they could never make them effective, nor had they the power to do so. The Chasidim and all those

¹ Lk. xxii. 29, 30; cf. Mt. xix. 28.

writers in the Psalms who cared so little for any external success, provided only they were allowed to worship God according to His will, had held such views. So it was that Jesus, grasping all that was most spiritual in the Old Testament, and proclaiming it as the central fact of His teaching, saw the kingdom of God as the full recognition of the divine sovereignty, as the fulfilment of the divine will and therefore righteousness.

The Old Testament had seen a vision of the nations of the world flowing to the mountain of the Lord's house, and the Gentiles coming to see His light. It had spoken of the word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem. Why, then, should not Jesus have thought of His kingdom extending throughout all the world, or realized that His teaching must be disseminated in one way only, by preaching the Word. The existence and supremacy of all such ideas must depend upon their hold upon men's hearts. They created a spiritual life. Those who accepted them might be called the sons of the kingdom; the time when this message was preached represented a new dispensation, one in which "the kingdom would pass to another nation." A new Israel would succeed to the old Israel.

Now, I do not see any reason why this should not have been Jesus' plan or purpose, why He should not have exhibited the breadth of vision and the far-reaching outlook which a true and deep spiritual insight into the Old Testament could give Him. Could anything less than that have created Christianity?

Nor is there any reason for thinking that such ideas could have grown up in the Apostolic age, if they had not been inherited from Jesus. This new conception of the kingdom was profound and far-reaching. The founder of a religion is he who has the creative mind which enables him to impress himself on those who follow him. The successors are but interpreters. Apart from St. Paul—and we know what he taught something quite different and much less impressive—and in a certain sense perhaps the author of the fourth Gospel, we have no reason for thinking the men of the Apostolic age were men of great power and genius. We know, too (of this there can be little doubt), that the words

of the Lord were interpreted literally, that a common belief was the speedy coming of the Son of man, and that there was a tendency to modify the tradition in this direction. Is it likely that in these circumstances a conception would be formed of the kingdom which implied this far vision of the future? The existence of the teaching of our Lord as recorded in the Gospels will account for all the different elements of the Apostolic age; it is not what the primitive Church was capable of creating.

But the decisive argument in favour of the correctness of the interpretation that I have maintained of our Lord's use of the kingdom is that it harmonizes with the rest of His work and words. This will become clearer the further we advance. The essential point is the harmony between the teaching of the kingdom and the new law of righteousness. We have given the lesson of the Sermon on the Mount. We saw that it implied a transformation of the idea of righteousness so profound as to supersede and yet fulfil the ancient law, so profound as to mean a reconstruction of human ideals and ultimately to produce a change in all the conditions of earthly life. Now, what purpose would all this have if the final end of all things was to come immediately? Clearly, it would be a futile waste of labour. What purpose would there be in promulgating a universal morality which might form a system for the whole world if it was only intended to be taught to a limited number of people, mostly Jews, for a few years only? The Sermon on the Mount, if correctly understood, means the preaching of a universal Gospel and a spiritual interpretation of the kingdom.

Finally, we know how a later generation would have expressed all these ideas. We have in the Gospel according to St. John an interpretation of our Lord's words in accordance with the teaching of a later age, and there we find that the "kingdom" has to be translated into a language more consonant to the times, and the phrase used is "life" or "eternal life," following our Lord's own pattern. So St. Paul interprets it as righteousness, and the growing Christian community when they wanted to contrast the old dispensation and the new began to talk of a Church, again

perhaps following indications given by Jesus Himself. The teaching of the Apostolic age is the natural development of the teaching of the Gospel, and expresses itself in quite new language. The transformation of the Jewish idea of the kingdom must be the work of Jesus Himself.

VI

The idea of the kingdom was the form in which the Jewish hope of a golden age which was to come was expressed. Such an expectation of a golden age has been an almost invariable possession of every nation which has raised itself above the level of unthinking acquiescence in the dull routine of normal existence. It has taken many forms and been adorned with much poetry and romance. To some it has been a kingdom on earth, to others it has been a kingdom in heaven. Some have thought of an ultimate time when our successors and descendants in generations to come shall dwell peacefully and happily under ideal conditions of human life. Others have thought of the city in the heavens of which we ourselves with all others who have been thought worthy of it will be the inhabitants.

This life of the future, as it was the heritage of the Jewish people, held by some worthily, by others unworthily, Jesus used as the vehicle of his teaching and transformed in using. Into the new conception he brought everything worthy which Israel gave; he eliminated everything national, temporary, particularist. He said the kingdom simply means doing God's will. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother, and my sister, and my brother." It was neither simply earthly nor simply heavenly, neither simply now nor simply to come, neither simply individual nor simply social. It was all of these. For the kingdom was wherever God's will was done.

And this shows us the one-sidedness of two different interpretations of Christianity. The one has looked only to the future life of the individual. It has thought little, directly at any rate, of human life and obligation on earth. It has placed its earthly ideal in the monastery, and earthly duty merely in so living as to ensure for the individual eternal salvation. Christian altruism and the performance of works

of mercy and the benefit of our fellow-men are commended as the means by which we are to attain the kingdom in heaven which is eternal life. All this is very inadequate, because it fails to realize that Christian righteousness and love are in themselves beneficial here because they benefit human life, that the life here is in itself good because it is a life lived according to God's will and just so far as it is that, and that the happiness and human well-being which come from the practice of righteousness are part of the promise of the Father.

But there is another perversion which comes as a reaction from such Christian other-worldliness. It is felt that the material well-being of our fellow human beings is a right ideal for us to seek. Christianity has always tended the sick, and cared for the orphan and the widow, and relieved the distressed. It is only carrying out such an ideal in a modern way, it is urged, to make social reform the main object of Christian effort. That, it is maintained, is the modern and scientific method of doing what Christian charity has always aimed at. And it is not a great step on from this to identify the kingdom with the particular enthusiasm which is attracting the higher minds of the day. All this is natural, but it is to mistake the whole meaning of Christ's teaching. The kingdom is not merely for the world to come. The well-being of mankind here is not to be despised or set aside as something Christianity is not concerned with. But the essence of Christ's teaching is that that well-being is not to be sought in any particular form of polity, whether the divine right of kings, as some of our fathers thought, or the establishment of democracy, as is more popular at the present day, or the social revolution, as some would believe; nor in the action of the state; nor in the spread of education; nor in the increase of material wealth, in fruitful commerce and wisely organized industry; but simply in each person seeking to live according to God's will and act righteously. If we all do that other goods will inevitably come. This is the secret of Christianity, and just so far as the world has accepted it has there been real human progress. The Golden Age comes by each man acting rightly.

CHAPTER VII

THE CRISIS OF THE MINISTRY

THE Galilaean Ministry was only a stage in the work of Jesus. In it He had preached and exhibited the Gospel, but not the whole of the Gospel. It was necessary that it should come to an end in order that He might attain the triumph of His ministry and the whole content of the Christian revelation be revealed. A series of events which formed the crisis of the ministry led, it might seem almost accidentally, to the necessary consummation.

First there was the disappointment caused by the failure of Jesus to respond to the wishes of the people. They began to hope that the Messiah had come, but they found that His aims were very different to anything that they had expected. An attempt at something like revolution appears to have been made by them. Jesus could have nothing to do with this, but the suspicions of the authorities were aroused. If Jesus was not to meet at the hands of Herod the fate of John the Baptist, a fate which would have left His work half complete and have deprived it of its power to influence the world, then there must be a change of method. For a time the public ministry seems to have ceased. Jesus spent some months either alone or with His disciples in a wandering life, for some time outside Jewish territory, and always outside that of Herod Antipas. It has been reasonably conjectured that this period was devoted to the training of the Apostles. That may not have been true of the whole time. At the end, however, we find Him accompanied by them, and their training reached its culmination in the confession of St. Peter. The disciples had, after much doubt and hesitation, accepted the Messiahship, and immediately a new note comes in. The disciples have now to learn that it is a suffering Messiah that has been

foretold. They have to learn the deeper note of the Gospel. Jesus henceforth looks steadfastly forward to the end. The time has come when He must go up to Jerusalem to claim His kingdom and to die.

I

The beginning of the great crisis of the ministry was the mission of the Apostles. Whatever opposition there may have been, the success of the preaching of Jesus and the influence of His spiritual power became daily greater. Crowds came to hear Him. Wherever He went they received Him with eagerness. The work was greater than He could accomplish. The harvest was plenteous. The labourers were few.¹ For some time now the Apostles had been associated with Him. They had heard His preaching. They knew His methods. They could deliver His message. So now He sends them forth two and two to continue His work.²

There are various interesting points that we can gather about this mission.³ It was only for Israel: "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"⁴ There was never any direct address to Gentiles

¹ From *The Discourses*, Lk. x. 2; Mt. ix. 37.

² Mk. vi. 7.

³ The "charge" to the Apostles presents various critical problems which can only be conjecturally solved. There are four versions: (1) Mk. vi. 7-11. (2) Mt. x. 5-42. (3) Lk. ix. 1-6 (taken from Mk.). (4) Lk. x. 2-12, addressed to the seventy. St. Matthew makes this the occasion for one of his long conflate speeches in which he puts together material from various sources. One of these was, as usual, St. Mark; a second was *The Discourses*, from which came also Lk. x. 2-12; the remainder came from words of our Lord, used on other occasions which might seem appropriate here. In *The Discourses*, the words here quoted were, it would appear, recorded without the occasion on which they were delivered being mentioned. St. Matthew assigns them, probably correctly, to this occasion. It was, in fact, a second and independent report of the charge of our Lord narrated in St. Mark. St. Luke appends it to the story he found in another source of sending out the seventy. It must be recognized, however, that here is an element of uncertainty in this reconstruction.

⁴ Mt. x. 5, 6. These words probably came from *The Discourses*, but were omitted by St. Luke as inconsistent with his design.

in the ministry of Jesus. It was His work to teach the Gospel—that is, to teach mankind true religion, and to proclaim His position as the Jewish Messiah. The expansion was to come, not through any direct teaching or command that He gave, but through the inherent force of a religion which was universal in its essence, and through the universalist ideas latent in Judaism.

“Go your way,” He said unto them. “Behold I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.”¹ They were to go forth as a Sadhu goes forth in India, with just one cloak, with sandals on their feet, and with a staff in their hand, but with nothing else, no purse, no scrip, no money, no food.² They were to enjoy the hospitality and live at the charge of those to whom they preached, for the labourer was worthy of his hire.³ When they entered a house it was with the solemn religious benediction, “Peace be to this house,” a peace which would settle on it if it were worthy.⁴ There they were to stay, not wandering from house to house in any city or village where they might be, like people seeking entertainment or amusement.⁵ Where people received them, there let them give all that they could. As for those who rejected them, it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment than for that city.⁶

The burden of their message was that of their Master, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” and like their Master they also proclaim the kingdom by their spiritual power. They received a commission from Him which gave them authority over evil spirits. They, too, like Him, could soothe the disordered brain. We are told, also, that they anointed the sick with oil and healed many.

The effect of this mission must have been considerable. Up till now the authorities might ignore what Jesus was doing. His activities might be neglected. He was but

¹ From *The Discourses*, Lk. x. 3; Mt. x. 16.

² Mk. vi. 8, 9. St. Mark's version is clearly correct.

³ From *The Discourses*, Lk. x. 7; Mt. x. 11.

⁴ From *The Discourses*, Mt. x. 12; Lk. x. 6.

⁵ Mk. vi. 10.

⁶ From *The Discourses*, Mt. x. 15; Lk. x. 12.

one man. He might arouse a certain amount of popular enthusiasm and excitement, but it had all been on a small scale. It was something very different if preachers sent by Him should be travelling through the country with that dangerous cry, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." It looked like real revolution. People were being disorganized. The time would come when they would rise up, as they had often done before, to follow this new Messiah. For the people of Galilee were always turbulent. There was, indeed, a good deal of speculation going on. People were wondering who this new teacher who was beginning to exercise so great an influence could be. Was he Elijah, whom the scribes, following the words of the prophet Malachi, said must come before the great and terrible day of the Lord, or was it a new prophet that had arisen?¹

It is this situation which is presented to us by the narrative of St. Mark. Herod Antipas heard of Jesus and of what He was accomplishing. He had had to deal with a dangerous movement like this once before. When the crowds collected round John the Baptist, he was not unmoved by what he had heard, and he did not consider it dangerous, until a definite attack had been made on his own conduct. Even then, had it not been for the influence of his adulterous wife, he would not have proceeded to extreme measures. Now his conscience begins to work. He feels guilty, and thinks that John the Baptist has risen from the dead and is continuing his work. Righteousness could not be destroyed by the influence of power.

It is probable that to this time must be referred the words of Jesus, reported by St. Luke, in answer to the warning that Herod wishes to kill Him. The warning, we are told, came from some Pharisees who desired to frighten Him away and thus check His activity. The answer that He makes is, "Go and say to that fox, Behold I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." This implies that Jesus had a definite conception of His work and mission. He had

¹ Mk. vi. 14-17.

certain things to accomplish. He must carry out His plan. He did not fear to give up His life, but His life must not be taken until He was ready. Then He would go up to Jerusalem. For the present it was necessary to be careful and avoid danger.¹

It was probably not long before this that the murder of John the Baptist had taken place. At some time during the Galilaean ministry disciples of John had come to Jesus with a message, asking who He was, and whether the hopes that John had had were to be disappointed; and Jesus had not only answered the question in a very striking way, but also had borne testimony to John.² Again, when John was beheaded, a message announcing what had happened had come to Jesus.³ It was a definite warning of what He was to expect, and it was obvious that if He was to accomplish His purpose, He must take precautions. A death like that of John the Baptist at the hand of Herod, in a distant border fortress, would have been a disaster. If His ministry was to be accomplished by His death—and that thought was always in His mind—it was in Jerusalem as a prophet of Israel that He must die.

So as soon as the disciples came back from their journey—perhaps even, as has been suggested, their mission was cut short by these disquieting rumours—Jesus takes them across the lake to a place where He knew that they would be in safety. St. Matthew definitely tells us that He withdrew, because of the message about the death of John the Baptist.⁴ St. Mark gives other reasons. The disciples tell Jesus everything they had done. He bids them come with Him to a place of retirement where they may rest. It is quite possible that they were elated with their success and the crowds about them, and like all enthusiastic followers were contemplating immediate action. But Jesus did not want immediate action. He did not want crowds. He wanted rest and time for contemplation, and an opportunity to train His disciples. So they crossed over the Sea of Galilee, and went to a retired place on the other side at the

¹ Lk. xiii. 31-33.

² From *The Discourses*, Mt. xi. 2-19; Lk. vii. 18-35.

³ Mt. xiv. 12.

⁴ Mt. xiv. 13.

foot of the hills in the plain beyond Bethsaida. Here they were in the territory of Philip. They were at present safe from all danger, and they might hope to be free from the crowds.¹

II

But if Jesus sought solitude He could not easily attain it. Excitement had now grown great. There was a feeling abroad that the time had come. No doubt the danger from Herod would accelerate matters, and the people would not be restrained. They saw where He went and began to flock thither from all the villages round. No doubt the word would pass from one to another, and a common impulse would lead everyone after Him. When Jesus came down from the hill-side where He had retired with His disciples, He saw a great multitude, and He had compassion on them because they were as sheep having no shepherd.² He began to teach them many things—very probably St. Luke is right in adding, about the kingdom of heaven.³ It would be teaching which they would not altogether understand and might quite easily interpret incorrectly. When they heard the word “kingdom,” they would think that Jesus would mean what they meant.

The rest of the story shall be told in the words of the Evangelist: “And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed; send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves wherewith they may eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy bread for two hundred denarii and give them to eat? He saith to them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five and two fishes. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies on the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes he divided among them

¹ Mk. vi. 31, 32.

² Mk. vi. 34.

³ Lk. ix. 11.

all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men."¹

The fourth Gospel tells us that when the people saw the signs that He did, they said, "This is of a truth the prophet that should come into the world," and that they wanted to come by force and make Him king.² In order probably to prevent His disciples from being contaminated by such worldly ambitions, He hurried them off to the boat to go to the head of the lake to Bethsaida.³ He Himself sent the multitude away and retired to a mountain to pray.

But the disciples in the boat were not able to accomplish their purpose; a strong north wind was blowing, and they could not reach Bethsaida. We give the rest of the narrative in the words of the Evangelist: "And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing, for the wind was contrary to them, and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh to them walking on the sea; and he was intending to pass them by. But they, when they saw him walking upon the sea, thought that it was a ghost and cried out, for all saw him and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and said unto them, Be of good cheer, it is I. Be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship and the wind ceased. And they were sore amazed in themselves, for they understood not the loaves for their heart was blinded."⁴

The result of the contrary wind was that instead of having

¹ Mk. vi. 35-44.

² Jn. vi. 14, 15.

³ According to the ordinary text, St. Mark reads: "He constrained his disciples to enter into the boat and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida" (vi. 45). The difficulty of *εἰς τὸ πέραν* is that Bethsaida is not on the other side. If the reading is kept, we must interpret it to mean "across the bay," or in some such way; but very probably we should omit *εἰς τὸ πέραν* with the Sinaitic Syriac version and some Greek MSS. It probably came in from Mt. xiv. 22 where it is correct. There is, however, a suspicion that Syr Sin has been revised in the interest of correct geography.

⁴ Mk. vi. 47-52.

made their way up the lake to Bethsaida, they had been blown across to the other side, and landed near the place whence they had started on the plain of Gennesaret.¹ Here, according to St. Mark, the people heard of His landing, and brought the sick from all sides that He might heal them. The fourth Gospel tells us that many of the people from the other side had come over in boats which had come from Tiberias,² and gives us here a long discourse which is represented as having taken place in the synagogue. The final result, according to that Gospel, is that "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him."

Such is the narrative as we can reconstruct it from our different sources, and it makes a consistent and coherent story, but there are a series of points which demand comment.

The first is the statement of the fourth Gospel that the multitude desired to make Jesus king. It is this that gives a meaning to the whole narrative. To lead a multitude into the wilderness—that is to say, into the scantily inhabited mountain district beyond Jordan—would be the natural prelude to an attempt at rebellion, and the assertion of claims to be king of Israel. It was what Theudas at a later date attempted, when he promised that the waters of the Jordan would divide to allow the multitude that he led to pass over.³ It was, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, what the Egyptian did when he collected a crowd in the wilderness to march with them to the Mount of Olives.⁴ Jesus had no such purpose, but here were the crowds collected together on the edge of the mountains. Could He not now be persuaded to declare Himself the Messiah, to take His place at the head of the multitudes who could have readily followed Him, and march with them to Jerusalem and seize the kingdom?

This was a natural desire of the people. It was equally obvious that it was inconsistent with the whole of Jesus' purpose. He did not wish them to raise a rebellion in the desert. It was not an earthly kingdom that He desired. The time would come when He must assert Himself as

¹ Mk. vi. 53.

² Jn. vi. 23.

³ Josephus, *Antt.*, xx., §§ 97-99.

⁴ Acts xxi. 38. Josephus, *Antt.*, xx., §§ 169-172; *B. J.*, ii., §§ 261-263

Messiah, but not in this way. Meanwhile there was much to be done. If our Lord's purpose was in any way what we have gathered it to be from the Gospels, there was clearly need for His disciples to learn much more. They must learn somehow to keep free from all these worldly complications, and yet recognize His Messianic office. It was necessary, therefore, in order to check political aims, that the disciples should be removed as quickly as possible, and that a period of silence, which on all grounds was demanded should begin. It is significant that the place to which he desired them to go was Bethsaida, outside the territory of Herod Antipas.

The result as regards the enthusiasm of His followers was that it was for a time checked. Jesus had disappointed them. He had spoken of a kingdom; but when He was offered it by a great body of enthusiastic, even fanatical, Galilaeans, who as little on this occasion as on any other thought of consequences, He refused. So people began to lose faith in Him.¹

But now we come to a second and more difficult question. What really happened? The narrative of St. Mark gives, in vivid and picturesque language, the story of an event which has all the appearance of having been miraculous, and has been so taken. But there are some difficulties. Why was it, as we are told more than once, that the disciples understood not concerning the loaves for their heart was blinded? The miracle was very easy to understand; was it a spiritual message that they had not understood? Shortly afterwards, when the disciples have forgotten to take bread, Jesus tells them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod, and it is apparent that they are bewildered by His remark, and He asks them why they have not understood what happened when five thousand were fed and twelve basketfuls were taken up.² On this occasion it appears that their defect was a failure to understand the spiritual significance of the event. There seems, therefore, to have been some ambiguity in tradition.

From a more modern point of view, difficulties have been found in the nature of the miracle. It has been pointed

¹ Jn. vi. 66.

² Mk. viii. 14-21.

out that, unlike other miracles of our Lord, it might be classed as a sign, as something of a miraculous and wonderful character done so as to impress the multitude, and that it is, in fact, inconsistent with the story of the temptation and the refusal of Jesus to turn stones into bread. It has further been pointed out that it implies an interference with the laws of natural phenomena, and with the ordinary processes of nature, so great as to be inconceivable to the scientific mind, or, in fact, to anyone with ordinary common experience. Therefore, it is held that it is impossible that it could happen, and this argument we find embellished with a good deal of rhetoric.

It has been maintained, therefore, that what really happened was some sort of sacramental meal. It is suggested (and it is not an unreasonable suggestion) that the solemn partaking of bread, blessed and broken by the Master, was a custom of Jesus and His disciples quite early in the ministry, and that later this custom was consecrated and made permanent at the Last Supper. What Jesus did, then, was to consecrate the multitude for the kingdom in some such sacramental feast; what He really gave was spiritual food. Then, probably under the influence of Old Testament stories, this was transformed into a miraculous event. An analogy in particular has been found with a story told of Elisha:

“And there came a man from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of corn in his sack. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. And his servant said, What, shall I set this before an hundred men? But he said, Give the people, that they may eat; for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat and shall leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord.”¹

The story of the feeding of the multitude was (it is maintained) constructed in imitation of this story, or, at any rate, modified so as to harmonize with it, and is a proof of the

¹ 2 Kings iv. 42-44. I must own that to me the resemblance is so slight as to seem fanciful.

desire of the early Church to construct a life of Christ modelled on the lives of the greater prophets.

It may be doubted whether this reconstruction will hold. We must notice in the first place that the story is placed in the same category as all, or almost all, the other miracles recorded in the Gospel, by the statement that it arose from the compassion that Jesus felt for the multitude: "In those days when there was again a great multitude, as they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat, and if I send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint in the way: and some of them are come from far."¹ When there was suffering it was inevitable that Jesus should relieve it, although to relieve suffering was not the purpose of His ministry. There is, in fact, no hint in either of St. Mark's accounts that there was any desire of working a sign, no hint that there was any other motive but that of relieving distress and suffering.

Nor was the result of the miracle at all in accordance with this supposed spiritual character. A spiritual significance was not obvious. The people wanted to make Him king—just the result which might come from some exhibition of power, just the result which would not come from a purely spiritual sacrament; and the further result is the retirement of Jesus for some considerable time from the danger to which He was exposed. Something happened which first roused in a way inconsistent with the purpose of the ministry the enthusiasm of the multitude, and then led to a great disappointment. If we have interpreted rightly the attitude of Jesus, His reluctance to perform miracles arose from the fact that they created a wrong sort of enthusiasm, and were inconsistent with the spiritual character of His mission. We have an echo of this in the fourth Gospel: "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled."² They did not understand the spiritual significance of the miracle,

¹ Mk. viii. 1-3. On the relation of this narrative to that in chapter vi. see the note p. 280.

² Jn. vi. 26.

but thought that the kingdom of God was coming, as many had imagined it, as a time of great material prosperity. The banquet and the feast were regular terms used of the days of the Messiah, and were by some taken literally. The whole attitude was, indeed, natural if there had been a real feeding, but it is difficult to reconstruct the history if we think it was only a sacramental meal.

But if there was such a feeding, it is not necessary to trouble about the means by which it took place. A miracle and a wonderful event may have taken place in many ways, and we need not disbelieve it because our imagination cannot picture to ourselves the way in which it could have happened. I would venture to suggest therefore that, exercising a certain amount of suspense of judgment, we should refuse to rule out the story on *a priori* grounds, as necessarily unnatural or impossible, and should recognize that something occurred so wonderful as to stir up the people in a remarkable way. I would suggest, also, that we should not be too anxious to adopt a rationalistic explanation of the walking on the waves and the stilling of the storm, and should there also exercise a certain suspense of judgment. It is quite easy to devise rationalistic explanations, but they are never really convincing.

In St. John's Gospel the story of the feeding of the multitude is followed by a long discourse on the bread of life, which it is stated was delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum. It may be doubted whether such a discourse was ever spoken. There is no record of such an event in the other Gospels, and we have seen how the period of preaching in the synagogue had probably come to an end. It is not, indeed, impossible that such an event should have happened, but it is improbable. If we turn to the discourse, it will appear as an admirable example of the way in which the discourses of the fourth Gospel, although not (certainly in many cases) the record of discourses actually delivered, interpret, and interpret correctly, the teaching of Jesus and the meaning of His life. Jesus did mean us to draw spiritual lessons from all that He did. The symbolism of spiritual food and the use of imagery drawn from food to express our spiritual sustenance were entirely in accordance

with His teaching. We find this symbolism in the temptation: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."¹ "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."² "Labour not for the meat that perisheth."³ All this was natural to Jesus' teaching. It was the sort of lesson that He would have had His disciples draw from the miracle of the loaves. So it was quite in accordance with the whole spirit of His teaching that the ideas of the bread from heaven and of Jesus giving us spiritual food should be put before us in this discourse, and that the early Church should have seen in the feeding of the multitude a symbol of the Eucharist, or perhaps rather should have seen in the Eucharist a symbol of the teaching which Jesus by His action had meant to give.

It is, I think, important to recognize the significance of all these events. Jesus had aroused popular enthusiasm, but had disappointed it. People had begun to think that He was the sort of Messiah that they wanted, but when they had attempted to carry out this hope by making Him a king that He might be the leader in a revolt, and might establish a kingdom such as they desired, He had failed them. The disappointment must have been great. It is probably a correct tradition that has been preserved, which tells us that many of the disciples went back and walked no more with Him. It was, therefore, a real testing to His disciples, and those that remained true to Him, although they had not in the least really understood all that it implied, showed themselves more clearly than they had yet done as worthy to be His disciples. Meanwhile the gathering of this large body of men could not have remained unknown to the authorities, and must have seriously increased the danger of the position.

III

When Jesus and His disciples landed (contrary to their intention) on the shores of the plain of Gennesaret, it soon became obvious that they were in a position of considerable

¹ Mt. iv. 4.

² Jn. iv. 32.

³ Jn. vi. 27.

danger.¹ It was close to Tiberias, the residence of Herod. There could be no doubt but that some account, probably largely perverted, would soon reach him of the unfortunate demonstration on the other side of the lake. Jesus might hope to keep His presence from being known, but that was soon shown to be impossible. Wherever He came there were demonstrations of popular excitement. "And when they were come out of the boat, straightway the people knew him and ran round about the whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick when they heard where he was. And wheresoever he entered into villages or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole."² Clearly nowhere on the shores of the Sea of Galilee could He conceal His presence.

But there were other dangers. We know how there had been earlier a conspiracy against Him of the Herodians and the Pharisees, and that already the report of His preaching in Galilee had begun to create anxiety in Jerusalem. On this side, too, there are difficulties, and we have double

¹ I have omitted Mk. viii. 1-26 as a repetition from another source of the events contained in vi. 30 to vii. 37. It was pointed out in the Introduction (p. 13) that the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000 are doublets—that is, stories of the same event drawn from different sources—and the same is, I think, true of other incidents. The parallelism may be shown as follows:

vi. 30-44	The 5,000.	viii. 1-9	The 4,000.
45-52	Walking on the sea.		
53-56	Visit to Gennesaret.	10	Dalmanutha.
vii. 1-23	Dispute with Pharisees.	11-13	Pharisees demand a sign.
	14-21	Leaven of Herod and the Pharisees (confute).	
24-30	Journey to Tyre, etc.		
31	Return to Sea of Galilee.	22	Return to Bethsaida.
(32-37	Heals the deaf man.)	(22-26	Heals the blind man.)

St. Mark would, of course, omit any event in the second source which obviously overlapped.

² Mk. vi. 54-56.

evidence on the point. Scribes had again come down from Jerusalem, and important discussions took place with them and the Pharisees. We may postpone for the present the detailed consideration of the discussion, but we may notice that the main subject was the question of the obligation of ritual observances, and that Jesus enunciates the great principle of the supremacy of the ethical above the ceremonial, whether in the law of ablution or the law of food. "That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."¹

We learn, too, that the Pharisees demanded a sign.² No doubt they said: "If you put before us such anarchical and blasphemous teaching, you must show some sign which will be your credentials." What they meant by a sign is shown by two striking illustrations which are given by Dr. Edersheim. A certain Rabbi was asked by his disciples about the time of the Messiah's coming. He replied: "I am afraid you will ask me for a sign." When they promised they would not do so, he told them that the gate of Rome would fall and be rebuilt, and fall again, when there would not be time to restore it, ere the Son of David came. On this they pressed, despite his remonstrance, for "a sign," when this was given them—that the waters which issued from the cave of Paneas would be turned into blood. Again, as regards "a sign from heaven," it is said that Rabbi Eliezer, when his teaching was challenged, successively appealed to certain "signs." First, a locust tree moved at his bidding a hundred, or, according to some, four hundred, cubits. Next the channel of water was made to flow backwards. Then the walls of the Academy leaned forward, and were only arrested at the bidding of another Rabbi. Lastly, Eliezer exclaimed: "If the law is as I teach, let it be proved from heaven!" when a voice fell from the sky (the Bath Qol): "What have ye to do with Rabbi Eliezer,

¹ Mk. vii. 20-23.

² Mk. viii. 11-13. (See note p. 280).

for the Halakhah is as he teaches."¹ To give signs such as this was quite inconsistent with the whole method of Jesus' life.

But all this was in present circumstances very inconvenient. It would increase the danger if Herod felt that he could have Jewish piety on his side, when he took steps against this popular and dangerous religious teaching.

The sequel was natural. It was clear that unless the ministry of Jesus was to be prematurely brought to an end, Jesus must escape this danger. If He desired to appear in Jerusalem as Messiah, He must avoid what was threatening Him. He knew, we believe, that He must lay down His life, but it must be at Jerusalem. So He went, and went, it might seem, somewhat speedily, away from Gennesaret, straight through Galilee into the territory of Tyre. Here He was outside Herod's jurisdiction. From here He went further afield, crossed the River Litany, and entered the territory of Sidon, and then by a long circuit, probably through the mountainous ranges to the north, into the territory of the Greek cities of the Decapolis. It is curious how lightly this journey is passed over by many commentators. Because it is narrated in but a few verses it seems a slight thing. As a matter of fact, it must have occupied many months, certainly all the summer, the only period during which such a journey would be likely.²

It was clearly not a preaching tour. Jesus wished to remain hidden. In the case of the only incident recorded, the healing of the child of the Syro-Phoenician woman, we are told that He entered into a house and would have no one know it. Then He passes further afield, and in the mountainous region on the slopes of Lebanon and Hermon He would have for a time rest and safety.

This journey, then, was a retirement from public life for the sake of safety; but was it more than this? Were His disciples with Jesus? It has been conjectured reasonably enough that they were, but it must be noticed that in the narrative of St. Mark there is no mention of them. It has, indeed, been surmised that one of the objects, perhaps

¹ Edersheim, *Life of Jesus the Messiah*, ii., pp. 68, 69.

² Mk. vii. 24, 31.

even the main object, of this retirement was that Jesus might be alone with His disciples, and that under these conditions He might train them for the work that they were to accomplish. At any rate their instruction was necessary. They must learn to understand His office and ministry; not only must they recognize Him as the Messiah, but they must learn what the office implied, and that would mean a great transformation of their ideals. They must learn more intimately than they had yet done, or than they could be taught in popular discourses, what His message was, and what the message was that they would have to give when their turn came. I do not feel quite certain that we can maintain that this process of teaching was going on all through this period of retirement, but at any rate we shall come shortly to the result of continued intercourse with Him in the more complete adhesion of His disciples and a higher understanding, and we shall be able to see how then Jesus led them on to a still more complete comprehension, both of the nature of His person and work and the meaning of His Gospel.

IV

The journey ended among the cities of Decapolis and at the Sea of Galilee.¹ Jesus probably did not at this time cross the lake, but made His way to Bethsaida and from there northward, keeping in the territory of Philip, until He reached the district of Caesarea Philippi. This place is memorable for what happened, and is of striking interest in itself. Situated at the head waters of the Jordan, it is one of the most beautiful spots in Palestine. Here, on the slopes of Mount Hermon, the river bursts forth from a cave, already a large stream, and the place from earlier days had been looked on as sacred. As a sanctuary of the old religion it was called Baal-Gad; under Greek influence it had been named Paneas, and was believed to be a haunt of the god Pan. Here Herod the Great founded a city and fortress, for the place—just where the road for Damascus started over the hills—had great strategic importance, and built a temple of white marble in honour of Augustus.

¹ See note, p. 280 above.

His son Philip, on succeeding to the tetrarchy, had adorned and beautified the city and given it his name. It was in this neighbourhood that St. Peter's confession was made, and high up on the mountain behind the event called the Transfiguration took place.

While they were travelling together Jesus asked His disciples: Whom do men say that I am? They replied: some John the Baptist, others Elias, others one of the prophets. He then asked them: But whom say ye that I am? Peter answered and said to him: Thou art the Christ. He bade them tell no man.¹

St. Matthew adds to this the following: Jesus said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and hell's gates shall not prevail against it. I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.²

Of these additional words we may postpone the discussion at present, only saying this, that the fact that they are not contained in St. Mark's Gospel does not necessarily prove that they are not genuine. We know that it is a habit of St. Matthew to attempt to make a story complete by conflating two different versions. In some cases we have the two versions before us, the one contained in St. Mark, the other derived from *The Discourses* and contained in St. Luke. The same thing was doubtless done in some other cases where we cannot prove it in the same way, because St. Luke does not happen to have incorporated the portion in question from *The Discourses*. Again, we know how St. Matthew amplifies a speech by adding material taken from another source, and very often spoken at another time. This may have been done on this occasion. The promise given to St. Peter as an explanation of his new name may have been given on some other occasion and the record preserved in this short saying, which St. Matthew feels may very suitably be placed here. The point I want to make is

¹ Mk. viii. 27-30.

² Mt. xvi. 18, 19.

that there is no external reason which need imply that the words are not genuine. But the questions involved are different in character to those that now confront us, and we had better postpone to another occasion our treatment of them.

The confession of Peter was the result on the disciples of their continued intercourse with Jesus, and the outcome of His method of self-revelation. The question of the Messianic secret has been discussed at great length by many commentators, and various theories, some more, some less derogatory to the authority of Jesus, have been put forward. It has been maintained that only gradually did He learn to think of Himself as Messiah, even that it was Peter's eager confession that first gave Him the courage to desire the office. It must be pointed out that all such theories are inconsistent with the story as we have it. If you desire to maintain such a position, you must not only reject the story of the baptism and of the temptation, but the whole character of the teaching of Jesus. Had He not thought of Himself as the Messiah, He could not have taught with the authority that He did. He could not have claimed to supersede as He did the old law and introduce a higher theory of life than it had given. The whole record of His life, even if you wish to omit the most obvious facts, the miracles, the forgiveness of sins, the authoritative power over evil and over man's destiny, is inconsistent with any less claim; for the claims of Jesus are just as great in what is non-miraculous and apparently normal in His ministry.

Why, then, it may be asked, did He not formally make a claim to the position which He believed that He held? If we take the narrative as it is given us in St. Mark—and that, as we have seen, appears for the most part to preserve the correct chronological sequence of events—there is nothing, with the possible exception of the occasional use of the term Son of man, which might seem to be an assumption of any unusual position. Why, then, this reticence? I venture to think that a few minutes' reflection will show you that our Lord's action and plan was the only course possible for Him. Suppose that He had begun by proclaiming Himself as the Messiah, what reason could people

have had for believing Him? It would obviously have exposed Him to the question, What justification have you to offer for what you say? How can we reasonably know that it is true? It would, in fact, have taken away from the authority of His words. And if some had at once believed Him, as people had believed all the various impostors who had arisen, it would have been just those who had the most conventional and the most unworthy conceptions of what the Messiah should be. And as a result all the troubles which arose from the secular aspiration of the Galilaeans would have been intensified, and the dangers also. Had He definitely proclaimed himself as the Messiah, the opposition of Herod and of the authorities of the Jewish Church would have been far more vigorous, and their action would have been prompt. They would have feared a disturbance, and would have treated Him as an impostor.

The action of Jesus was dictated by political wisdom, and (as has been pointed out recently) by true psychological insight. He so acted as to lead those who were worthy to think Him the Messiah. He proclaimed the kingdom. He taught in a way which would inspire all who heard Him. He taught as only the Messiah had a right to teach. He made it clear by His spiritual power, beneficently exercised, that the kingdom of God had come. His answer to John the Baptist is significant of His message. Do you think that an imaginative writer of the early Church could have had enough historical insight to conceive the situation? He did not say what He claimed to be, but he spoke and acted in such a way that those that understood would know. And so as regards the disciples, He gradually influences them by His teaching, by His spiritual power, by His personality, until, although many of the conventional signs and characteristics of the Messiah were absent, they believed in Him. So when they are asked the question, Whom say ye that I am? Peter answers, Thou art the Christ.

This purposeful action seems corroborated by the events which are narrated as following shortly afterwards, perhaps not immediately. We are told that from this time Jesus began to speak of His death and sufferings. We are told how Peter, who had just confessed His faith, was full of

what he considered an entirely natural indignation and received a most severe rebuke, and then how Jesus more clearly and definitely than ever before began to expound the Gospel of the Cross, that ultimate and complete self-sacrifice which is the fundamental rule of the Christian life.

I need not remind you that all this—as it appears to me, natural sequence of events—is condemned by some critics as unhistorical, that we are asked to believe that someone thirty years or so later invented it, that Jesus had no intimation of the end that awaited Him, that the protest of Peter was introduced to work out the thesis which was one of the fancies of St. Mark's Gospel, that the Apostles were a singularly stupid body of men, and that the meaning of Christ's death in its bearings on the Christian life was a discovery of the early Church towards which they had no help from the teaching of Jesus. I am afraid that all criticism of this sort seems to me so baseless that I do not feel able to deal with it with that patience which no doubt I ought to display. We shall deal later with our Lord's conception of His Messianic office and of the suffering Messiah. What I will put to you now is this: Is it in the least likely that a writer a generation later would have thought it necessary to devise this elaborate scheme of events, or, in fact, had the historical imagination to do so? And is not the succession of events, as they are described, reasonable and natural? It was, as we have shown, impossible for our Lord to have taught His Messianic claims in any other way than He did. It was natural that gradually His intimate disciples should have become convinced. It was natural that it should be Peter who made the confession. It was natural, if our Lord was convinced of the necessity of His death, that it should be after His disciples had attained a full conviction about Him that He should begin to give this higher revelation. It was natural (if one considers all that was involved in the ordinary beliefs about the Messiah) that this should mean a severe shock to them and that Peter, impulsive as always and eager for what he believed was for the honour of His Master, should be the one to express this. It was natural that our Lord should have rebuked him (and could such

a rebuke have been invented?) exactly on the grounds that He did, for they are consistent with His teaching. It was natural that Jesus should now begin to show how the fate which awaited Him harmonized with all the deepest realities of the spiritual life. And certainly from this time onward there is a deeper and a sadder note in the teaching of Jesus, a note which reveals itself in many discourses and incidents and parables.

And then, again, are we to think that it was from Jesus, or from His followers, that the deepest characteristics of His teaching should come? Jesus had taught the Gospel of love, an ethical system which finally resolved itself into the maxim, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But the man who loves his neighbour as himself must be prepared, if called on, to lay down his life for his neighbour. Jesus felt that He must fulfil this law. He could not accomplish His work unless He was prepared to die. How long He had had this conviction we cannot say. It is probable that the consciousness of coming suffering must always have been with Him, for He looked upon Himself as the Servant of God, and suffering was the lot of the Servant. But the inner consciousness of Jesus must be something of which we can only have glimpses. In any case, the progress of events had now made it clear that He could not expect to accomplish His purpose without a break with official Judaism which must mean His death. Thus He would exhibit Himself that law of life which He had laid down. And now was the right time to make His followers realize the ultimate principle which His own life was to exhibit—the law of self-sacrifice.

The verses that follow are among the most impressive even in the Gospels.¹ "Do you wish," He says to the people,

¹ It may be noted also that these are some of the best attested sayings of our Lord. Mk. viii. 34 recurs not only in the two parallel passages (Mt. xvi. 24; Lk. ix. 23), but also in Mt. x. 38 and Lk. xiv. 27, though in a negative form, probably from *The Discourses*. Mk. viii. 35 occurs in two parallels (Mt. xvi. 25; Lk. ix. 24), in Mt. x. 39 and Lk. xvii. 33. These two verses last referred to differ so much in phraseology that they possibly come from separate sources. It also occurs in Jn. xii. 25. See Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, pp. 86-88).

“to be a follower of Mine. Then you must do as I do. You must be prepared to give up everything. You must be prepared to take up the life that I lead, and to die the death that I will die, if you are called to it. If you care only for your life and the things of this life, you will lose everything even here. If you are prepared for My sake and the sake of the Gospel to give up everything, you will gain everything. The things of this world and all its wealth can do no good to one who has lost his own soul. A time will come when you will have to give an account of your life, and if you are ashamed now of Me and of My words, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when He comes to judge the world.” The meaning, no doubt, from one point of view is eschatological, but it is not only eschatological. It never is in the Gospels. A man’s life, even here, is quite independent of the things of the world.

It all harmonizes together: Jesus’ conception of His own end, His Gospel, and His lesson to the people. It is the fundamental note of Christianity, and I do not feel able to believe that it comes from those followers of His who found it so difficult to learn, and even after His death were not without inadequate ideas of His mission. If any of you are frightened of the phrase “let him take up his cross,” you are quite at liberty to believe that the passage has been modified by the influence of later phraseology without necessarily thinking that the whole passage has been interpolated, but I do not see why Jesus should not have used it. The cross was a symbol of a degraded death, its cruelty had often been exhibited in Palestine, and everyone who came in contact with the Roman authorities would know that it might be his lot.

V

But one more incident. Six days afterwards, accompanied only by Peter and James and John, Jesus sought the solitude of the higher mountains, probably the upper slopes of Hermon, and there He was transfigured before them. His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow: so as no fuller on earth can whiten it. And there

appeared unto them Moses and Elias: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for thee and one for Moses and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son: hear him."

I am not going to trouble you with all the vagaries of modern criticism. This story was, we are told, invented by the early Church. Perhaps it was a reconstruction of some resurrection story. Peter and James and John were selected as witnesses to give an air of credibility to the story. The six days are the six days of creation, or the six days that Moses spent on the mountain—the parallel is singularly inadequate, as Jesus does not spend six days on the mountain. It would really be convenient if the Evangelist had explained to us these rather far-fetched symbols and parallels, as they are certainly difficult to discover.

I could only put this to you: It may well be that there are elements of exaggeration in the story. We do not expect experiences of this nature to be reported in a literal and exact manner. But is there anything that we have recorded here which would not be consistent with the intense spiritual experience through which the Apostles and our Lord had passed? We read and narrate amid all the commonplace comfort of our modern life these stories of great spiritual experiences which have modified the history of the world. The confession of the Messiah, the prediction of His sufferings, the exaltation of the life in Christ, the coming of the Lord in glory, were not all these tremendous spiritual facts? Could all this happen without mind and spirit being strained? For Jesus and His disciples all this must have meant a great crisis. Has a great spiritual teacher never before or since sought the solitude of the mountains—alone or with his disciples—urged by the intense desire to commune with God? And would, for such men, the spiritual experience be quite normal? We shall gradually find out, as we proceed, what we are to think and believe about Jesus; but even to those who do

not accept all that Christian tradition implies, I would say, Can you really reduce the spiritual experiences which created the Gospel to the dull level of our commonplace lives? And could a great movement, which has so profoundly modified the world, have come into being without such experiences? I am not prepared to say exactly what happened at the Transfiguration, and semi-rationalistic reconstructions seem to me always singularly unconvincing, but I see nothing in the story, as we have it, that might not have been told by the disciples as a truthful description of what they believed had happened.

The great crisis of Jesus' life was now passed. There had been the period of early and enthusiastic reception, when it might have been thought that the kingdom would speedily be established in men's hearts. There had been growing opposition and danger. There had been a time of retirement and rest. Then had come the conviction and confession of the disciples, and the growing consciousness of the end. The preparation had been made. Now there was nothing left but to set His face to go to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MESSIAH

WE are told how, after His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He had, we remember, passed through a spiritual crisis of great intensity. The full conviction of His mission had come upon Him. He had realized that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, the Servant of the Lord. I have pointed out to you how, as we can gather from His teaching, His mind had been formed (if we may use the term) by the earnest and spiritual study of the word of God. The conception of the person and work of the Messiah, what He was and what He must do, had gradually fashioned itself, and in His baptism came the final conviction of His calling. Naturally enough He sought the solitude of the desert, as holy men of old had done, and naturally enough there temptation and struggle came to Him, for He had a tremendous decision to make.¹

He was hungry with fasting, and the devil came and tempted Him. He was conscious of powers such as other men had not; why should not He use them for His own advantage? If, as the Baptist said, God out of these stones could raise up children to Abraham, why should not He, the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread? Why should not He secure for Himself a life free from care and want? The temptation might go further. There was widespread want and misery in the world. Why should not He use the powers that He possessed for at once introducing the Messianic kingdom that men expected, and times of wealth and ease and material happiness?

¹ The story of the Temptation comes from *The Discourses*, Mt. iv. 1-11; Lk. iv. 1-13; see also Mk. i. 12, 13.

All this was natural enough. Have not most of us had similar dreams of some miracle increasing human well-being, and solving all those anxious problems of life which men have? But one thing was clear to Jesus. All this was absolutely inconsistent with what He knew was His work. He had not come to get comfort or material well-being for Himself, or even for others. His work was spiritual. Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

But there were other ways in which He might use His powers. How was He, with this message which was forming in His mind, to win credence? Would people be likely to believe Him? He must bring some credentials. The prophet had foretold that the Lord would suddenly come to His temple, and the Rabbis had elaborated this so as to create one of the signs of the Messiah.¹ He would appear suddenly on the topmost pinnacle of the temple, and descend among the expectant people. What better way could be conceived of asserting His Messianic claims? No one who had seen that happen could doubt that He had come with divine credentials, and they would readily hear His message. No doubt the angels of God would support Him in His descent. But it would mean presuming upon His powers. It would be tempting God. It would mean commending His message in the wrong way.

The ordinary expectation of the Messiah was that He would be a great king and conqueror. He would be endowed with more than natural power, and under His leadership the armies of Israel would be supreme in the world. The great Messianic kingdom would be created. He, as Messiah, would rule the world in righteousness, and then the golden age would come. It was a natural dream, and He knew that He had the power, but it would not attain what He had come to accomplish, for men would not be any better than they had been, and He could only bring it about by using means quite inconsistent with His whole nature. It would mean employing the methods of the world; it would mean the appeal to force; it would mean not the coming of the kingdom of God, but the submission of the

¹ See Edersheim, *Life of Jesus the Messiah*, i., p. 293.

Messiah to the prince of evil. To worship God only, to fulfil His will, to work His righteousness, was the one thing demanded of man.

We need not look on the story of the temptation as a literal account of actual events. Origen first pointed out for us that it is a figurative story describing in picturesque language the temptations to which Jesus would be exposed.¹ We can well be content with Origen's support, and refuse to turn poetry into prose. But what I would first point out to you is how entirely suitable and natural to the situation the Temptation as depicted is. Jesus is conscious of His mission and His spiritual power. He knows, too, the right way of fulfilling that mission, and He has already an intuition of what it will lead to. It means toil and suffering, and perhaps death. There were other very plausible ways of doing what He wished. Why should He not fulfil all the highest natural hopes of His countrymen? Why should He not do something startling and wonderful to draw all men to Himself? Why not secure material comfort for Himself and all the world? We know how the people wanted to make Him king, how the Pharisees demanded a sign, how people crowded round Him that he might heal them, and were anxious to eat His bread, but did not care for His spiritual teaching. Clearly there was a higher and lower way, and much temptation to choose the lower way, and that temptation Jesus resists.

But is the story of the Temptation true, or is it an imaginative effort of a later theologian? If it is true it must come from Jesus Himself. Just as He described the spiritual experience of His baptism in the natural figurative language which might convey His meaning, so He would describe His Temptation. But did He do so? I can point out to you that it is contained in a very early source, and it shows a psychological insight which I could hardly expect from any other than Himself. Further than that, it exactly harmonizes with the situation depicted in the Gospels. The difficulty some people would feel about it is that it presupposes a Christ with miraculous powers. As they think that such a conception is impossible, they are

¹ Origen, *De Principiis*, IV. i. 16.

compelled to assume a later origin. To that I can only reply that the conception of Jesus as recorded for us in the authorities that we possess exactly corresponds with the Jesus of the Temptation stories. The Gospels tell us of one who was the Messiah of the Jews, but throughout His life disappointed their expectations because He would not be the Messiah that they wanted. He had great spiritual powers, and is represented as being able to work miracles, but there is a curious self-restraint in the way in which He uses these powers. He will not work a sign, He will not use them for His own advantage, He will make no appeal to force and power. On the contrary, His one aim is to arouse and create the spiritual life of those among whom He works. He will do none of the things they wish, but bids them fulfil God's will. Now the Temptation tells us that Jesus had deliberately rejected all these imperfect ideals, that He had had the natural human desire to work in that way, but that He knew they were entirely inconsistent with the fulfilment of His purpose, and He had had the strength to resist what must have seemed an overpowering temptation. Our narrative is throughout self-consistent; it is psychologically true; it depicts just what must have been the temptation of the Jesus of the Gospel. For my part, it is easier to believe that all these things are true than that they are the result of later imaginings.

I

The hope of a Messiah was among the most remarkable features of the religion of Israel. How did it come about that this small and obscure nation should have had such a vitality of hope, should have looked forward continually, in spite of all adversity and misfortune, to the coming of one in whom should be accomplished for them their destiny, a destiny which should extend their influence and power over the whole earth?

It was quite early in Israel's history that the hope grew up of the coming of the ideal monarchy of the house of David. The promise of it comes first in the address of Nathan to David—a passage which dates in its present form from some time towards the close of the monarchy,

but contains an early and probably authentic element: "When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son."¹ This conception of the greatness of Israel associated with the house of David occurs in a series of passages in the prophets. "In that day," says Amos, "will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen. . . . I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities . . . and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."² "The children of Israel," says Hosea, "shall return, and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall come with fear unto the Lord, and to his presence in the latter days."³ And Jeremiah: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute judgment and justice in the land. . . . And this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord is our righteousness."⁴

Let us notice one thing. You will find that many of our critical friends will tell you that these Messianic passages in the pre-exilic prophets have been interpolated, and belong to a later period. I am afraid that the arguments that they use are not very convincing to me, but for the present purpose the criticism does not matter. We are not concerned with the chronology of the Messianic idea, but with the fact. Exactly how that idea grew up may well be an interesting subject of investigation; the important point for us is that it was there, and whether it was formulated a little earlier or a little later does not really matter.

This conception of the ideal sovereignty of the house of David is summed up for us in a great passage in the Psalms, which must have played a considerable part in the development of thought:

¹ 2 Sam. vii. 12-14.

³ Hos. iii. 5.

² Amos ix. 11-15.

⁴ Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

I have found David my servant;
 With my holy oil have I anointed him: . . .
 My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him;
 And in my name shall his horn be exalted. . . .
 I will also make him my firstborn,
 The highest of the kings of the earth. . . .
 My covenant will I not break,
 Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.
 Once have I sworn by my holiness,
 I will not lie unto David.
 His seed shall endure for ever,
 And his throne as the sun before me.¹

When I was speaking about the kingdom you will remember how I laid stress on the way in which the reign of David had created an ideal for Israel; it was natural, therefore, that all the highest conceptions for the future ruler should be expressed in language connected with the race of David.

Then we get also a definite expectation of an individual person. In the Book of Micah there is an ideal picture drawn of the future for Jerusalem, a future of peace and prosperity, of honour among the nations, and a great position in the world—"Out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,"²—and this ideal future is associated with the ideal ruler of Israel. "He shall stand and shall feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth."³

And then there are the great passages of the book of Isaiah: "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him . . . with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek: and his resting place shall be glorious."⁴

¹ Ps. lxxxix. 20-36. ² Mic. iv. 2. ³ Mic. v. 4. ⁴ Is. xi. 1-10.

Or, if we turn to the Psalms, we get the same ideas in a more religious setting:

The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord and against his Anointed. . . .
I will tell of a decree:
The Lord said unto me, Thou art my Son;
This day have I begotten thee,
Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession.¹

We do not know when this Psalm was written, nor do we know what are the circumstances which called it forth, but the pious Jew, as he pondered over its words, might wonder who was the Anointed and who was the Son, and what was this dominion over the whole earth, and the conception would grow up of the Messiah who was the Son of God.

Or what hopes had inspired, and what visions were aroused by that poetical description of the ideal reign of the ideal king?

Give the king thy judgments, O God,
And thy righteousness unto the king's son.
He shall judge thy people with righteousness
And thy poor with judgment. . . .
In his days shall the righteous flourish
And abundance of peace, till the moon be no more.
Yea, all kings shall fall down before him.
All nations shall serve him.²

I believe that Psalms such as these are historical poems, the product of that great creative age of Hebrew literature when under the shadow of the second temple the pious Israelite idealized the history of his country, and gave us this fanciful picture of the reign of Solomon, modelled on the empire of the Ptolemies. But the power of such a poem in building up the hopes of Israel cannot be exaggerated.

Or once more, when the Jew read:

The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
The Lord shall send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion;
Rule them in the midst of thine enemies.³

¹ Ps. ii.

² Ps. lxxii.

³ Ps. cx. i.

he would ask who is this Lord whom the Lord addresses. It may be (although I do not feel at all certain that it is so) that it is Simon the Maccabee that is here referred to, but the origin of the Psalm does not really concern us. However it arose it would help to build up the conception of the ideal king of Israel, with his close association with the God of Israel, and if the second Psalm suggested the title Messiah, this would suggest the designation Lord.

The passages which we have examined come from many writers and different periods, but they all help to create the expectation of an ideal future for Israel associated with an ideal ruler. Israel was little enough in the eyes of the world; it had to submit to the great conquerors who one after another traversed its country, to Nebuchadnezzar, and to Cyrus, and to Alexander, to the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae, but there never died out this unconquerable hope for the future, and this hope is, in most writers, associated with an ideal figure who concentrates in his own person the great national characteristic of righteousness.

II

We come next to the later Jewish hope. During the time of the Maccabees, the ordinary Messianic hope appears to have been in abeyance. The actual struggle with Hellenism absorbed all the energies of the people; for a time they were dazzled with a brilliant and unhoped-for success, and left off thinking of the future. Moreover, when the leaders of the people were of the tribe of Levi, it was hardly courteous to talk about a Messiah of the house of David. Yet the Book of Daniel made an important contribution to thought, when it described the vision of the Ancient of Days and one like unto a Son of man who came unto Him, to whom was given the dominion and glory and kingdom.¹ To the prophet no doubt this was a representation of the ideal Israel, and it is interpreted shortly afterwards as the saints of the Most High, but an expression had been evolved susceptible of a far deeper meaning than the writer himself had ever contemplated.

¹ Dan vii. 13, 14.

It is possible that as the Maccabean monarchy became established a new conception of the Messiah grew, which seemed more consonant with what was actually happening. Why, it might be asked, was it necessary that the Messiah should be of the house of David; why not of the house of Levi, that tribe from which came the high priest and all the priesthood, from which in these later days had come the Saviours of Israel; why should not it be the holy stock through which redemption was to come? It is perhaps to the days of John Hyrcanus, the high priest, who was also the prophet and the king, that is due the new conception of a Messiah of the house of Levi, as it is represented to us in one of the most interesting and difficult of Jewish writings, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

The Patriarch Levi is represented as saying: "I saw seven men in white raiment, saying unto me: Arise, put on the robe of the priesthood, and the crown of righteousness, and the breastplate of understanding, and the garment of truth, and the plate of faith, and the mitre of the head, and the ephod of prophecy. And they severally carried these things and put them on me, and said unto me: From henceforth become a priest of the Lord, thou and thy seed for ever . . . and they said to me: Levi, thy seed shall be divided into three offices, for a sign of the glory of the Lord who is to come. And the first portion shall be great: yea, greater than it shall none be. The second shall be in the priesthood. And the third shall be called by a new name, because a king shall arise in Judah, and shall establish a new priesthood after the fashion of the Gentiles, and his presence is beloved, as a prophet of the Most High, of the seed of Abraham our father."¹ This passage implies the attribution of great honour to the house of Levi, and may perhaps be the origin of a form of thought which associated the hope of Israel with that tribe. In the *Testaments* as we have them the Messiah comes from Levi and Judah, but that probably means a conflation of the traditions. This form of expectation never prevailed widely, but sporadically we have references to a Messiah of the house of Levi.

¹ *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (ed. Charles, Adam and Charles Black, 1908). *Lev.* viii.

It was in the disastrous period of the first century that the Messianic hope became strong. The degeneration of the Hasmonaean monarchy, and the terrible cruelties of Alexander Jannaeus, dissipated the feeling of satisfaction which the stirring events of the Maccabaeen revolt had raised, and soon Israel found itself under the iron yoke of Rome. The feeling arose, how long will the Lord withhold His hand? When will He come to avenge His people? And religious visions began to grow as the realities of life became more grim. A writer whose work is preserved to us under the name of Enoch elaborated the great conception of Daniel. He saw a vision of "One who had a head of days, and his head was white like wool, and with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. . . . This is the Son of man who hath righteousness."¹ He is called also the Elect One, and the Anointed. It is His function to execute judgment. There will be a resurrection of all Israel. The books of the living are opened. All judgment is committed unto the Son of man. He will judge angels and men, and particularly those who oppressed the saints. The fallen will be cast into a fiery furnace. The kings of the earth will be tortured in Gehenna. The righteous shall have eternal life, and the Elect One shall dwell among them.

I have already given you an account of the Messianic kingdom as it is depicted in the Psalms of Solomon,² it remains only to add the description of the Messiah: "A righteous king and taught of God is he that reigneth over them; and there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their king is the Lord Messiah. He shall not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor shall he multiply unto himself gold and silver for war, nor by ships shall he gather confidence for the day of battle. The Lord himself is his King, and the hope of him that is strong is the hope of God. He shall have mercy upon all the nations that come before him in fear. He shall bless the people of the Lord with wisdom and gladness. He

¹ *The Book of Enoch* (ed. Charles, Oxford, 1912), xlvi. 1-3.

² See above, p. 246.

himself also is pure from sin. He shall not faint all his days because he leaneth upon his God. Who can stand against him? for he is mighty in his works and strong in the fear of God, tending the flock of the Lord with faith and righteousness; and he shall suffer none among them to faint in their pasture. In holiness shall he lead them all, and there shall be no pride among them that any should be oppressed."¹

It has sometimes been maintained that the Messianic expectation did not really exist before it was created by Christianity. There were, indeed, passages which might be so interpreted in the Old Testament, but their significance had never been realized. I do not think that it is really possible to maintain this paradox, for such it is. No doubt there were periods in the history of Israel when the belief was more faint, and there were circles of thought in which it did not prevail, but that is the utmost that can be conceded. No doubt Josephus says little about it, but he was writing for Romans as the parasite of a Roman emperor, and the thought of a rival sovereign, however visionary, was not palatable in such quarters. On the other hand, the many attempts at rebellion which he narrates in his history can be understood only if there was such a hope among the people. If we turn to the Gospel narrative, it clearly implies such an expectation among the people, and we have quite sufficient literary evidence to support it.

It would be more correct to say that when Jesus came there was a widespread expectation of the coming of the Messiah. It was based upon the Old Testament. It took various forms, and was interpreted according to the spiritual and intellectual standpoint of different individuals. It might take the form of an earthly king, the Son of David, or a supernatural being, the Son of man. The Messiah was the Son of God, the Lord the Holy One of Israel. Associated sometimes with the thought of an earthly kingdom, sometimes with eschatological expectations, there was almost always an element of universalism in it—either the Jews would rule over the hated Gentiles, or it would be a light

¹ *Psalms of Solomon* (ed. Ryle and James, Cambridge, 1891), xvii. 35-46.

to lighten the Gentiles. The whole earth would acknowledge the one God.

The Jewish conception did not include all the elements of hope in the Old Testament. There was not apparently any reference to the prophetic idea. There were expectations of the coming of a great prophet like Moses, but his work was not associated with the Messiah. There was also no doctrine of a suffering Messiah, and the servant of the Lord in the second part of Isaiah was not interpreted in this sense. The servant was Israel. There was no doctrine, again, of atonement associated with the Messiah, or of redemption through Him. The Messianic times, indeed, were times of cleansing and redemption, but the idea of a Messiah being a sacrifice for sin had no existence. Nor, again, except so far as there was an expectation of a Messiah of the house of Levi (and such a form of the belief was not common), was there any reference to the fulfilment of the priestly ideas of the Old Testament. In fact, if we compare the current Jewish ideas with the Old Testament, we shall notice that, although they are more definite and precise they are far less spiritual and far narrower in their outlook.

III

In what way did Jesus think of His office? He had come as the Messiah, the expected of Israel; He had gradually taught His disciples to recognize who He was. But what sort of Messiah did He claim to be?

It is recorded how, at His baptism, Jesus heard a voice saying unto him, "Thou art my son, my beloved," and it has been pointed out that in these words were implied two great Old Testament conceptions. The Messiah was Son of God; this was clear to anyone who studied the Psalms, for the same Psalm which spoke of Him as the Anointed spoke of Him as the Son. But what did the Son of God mean?

We are told that at the trial or preliminary investigation before the Sanhedrin, the high priest asked Jesus, "Art thou the Christ, the son of the Blessed?" Jesus answered, "I am." It was His only definite public claim to the title and office of the Messiah. It was made with the

expectation of death before Him, and in full consciousness of what it would mean. Jesus died because he claimed to be the Messiah and the Son of God. The high priest in the form of his questions showed that to him the two names were identical. Son of God was a recognized title of the Messiah. It was, therefore, natural enough that Jesus had never used it of Himself—to have done so would have been to make a public claim before the time—but there is quite sufficient evidence that He thought of Himself as, in an especial way, related to the Father, and that He was Son in a sense that no one else could claim to be. In the agony in the garden He prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him; “Father,” He prayed, “all things are possible to thee; take away this cup from me; but not what I will, but what thou willest.”¹ “Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”² “I appoint you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me.”³ “The angels of the little ones behold always the face of my Father which is in heaven.”⁴

The term “the Son of God” might be used with many varieties of signification. It might be little more than an honorary title for a king; it might have a purely moral signification; it might mean only the good man who could be called the Son of God; but it seems as if Jesus used it in a different and much more intimate signification. In St. Mark’s Gospel, when speaking of the last things, He adds, “Of that day and of that hour knoweth no one, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father.”⁵ It is hardly likely that this passage which seems to limit Jesus’ knowledge would have been the work of the Christian Church, yet, though it limits the knowledge, it means the claim of a position transcending angels and men. In *The Discourses* is found another saying of Jesus even more remarkable, “All things are delivered to me by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father, nor does any one know the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son shall reveal him.”⁶

¹ Mk. xiv. 36.² Mt. vii. 21.³ Lk. xxii. 29.⁴ Mt. xviii. 10.⁵ Mk. xiii. 32.⁶ Mt. xi. 27; Lk. x. 22.

When we turn to St. John's Gospel, we find this relationship of the Father and the Son worked out at length. Even if we do not consider that the speeches in which this is done represent more than the interpretation of the writer, yet it has already been suggested on more than one occasion that the Johannine interpretation represents the spirit of Christ. Jesus did not talk or talk often as St. John represents Him; but St. John represents Him as so talking because he knew, what the other Gospels tell us, that Jesus, when He thought of Himself as the Son of God, meant that God was in Him, and He in God, and this in a different way to any other. Jesus thought of Himself as the Son of God, for the Scriptures told Him that the Messiah was the Son of God, but in Him this term, as all others that He uses, has a deeper and more spiritual signification.

When Jesus confessed to the high priest that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, He added, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven,"¹ claiming for Himself, that is, both the title Son of man and also the functions ascribed in the Old Testament to the Messiah. "The Son of man would come with the clouds of heaven."² The Lord would sit on God's right hand, and all His enemies would fall beneath His feet. Unlike the title Son of God, the title Son of man is represented in the Gospels as one habitually used by Jesus, and it hardly occurs elsewhere in the New Testament. Under these circumstances the theory of Bousset that the title was never used by our Lord but was given Him by the Church seems somewhat bold.

The title itself has a complicated history. When the phrase first meets us it is a paraphrase for man, following a natural Semitic idiom: "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of man that thou visitest him?"³ It occurs regularly in Ezekiel as the title used by the Almighty in addressing the prophet, and in Daniel, as we have seen, it means a being of human form. But Daniel had created a picture of the Son of man, and through him it became a title designating the Messiah as a supernatural being. So it was used in the book of Enoch, and perhaps elsewhere.

¹ Mk. xlv. 62.

² Dan. vii. 13.

³ Ps. cxliv. 3.

The usage by our Lord has caused some perplexity. He employs it generally in the third person, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." "Hereafter shall ye see the heaven open and the Son of man descending in power." And the question has been asked, Did Jesus so think of Himself? Was He not rather as a humble prophet merely foretelling the coming of the Messiah? But His disciples misunderstood Him and thought he spake of Himself. The test for such theories is, Do they apply universally? Are there passages which may reasonably be considered authentic to which they do not apply? I think it is clear that the words addressed to the high priest must have come from Jesus, and that He is speaking of Himself. And what of the following: "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."¹ These words clearly come from Jesus; He is speaking of Himself and designating Himself as the Son of man. I do not think there are any legitimate grounds for distrusting the obvious interpretation of the Gospels.

But this leads us to Jesus' use of the term. The Son of man in Daniel is associated with a vision of the Almighty. In Enoch it represents the Messiah as coming to judgment. When Jesus used it, it meant that He claimed to be the Messiah from heaven, that He believed that to Him as the Messiah was extended dominion and authority, that the final judgment of all men, the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked, would be exercised through Him, and He uses in the description of His office the language of Jewish imagination. We certainly need not be too anxious to take all the phraseology literally, but we cannot doubt that Jesus claimed for Himself the functions associated with the word.

But we have not yet exhausted the meaning of the word as used by Him. The Son of man represented to earlier writers the glory and exaltation of the Messiah, but Jesus always employs it when He wishes to speak of His humiliation: "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men; and they shall slay him." And equally significant is the use of the word in regard to the human sympathies of Jesus:

¹ Mt. viii. 20; Lk. ix. 58.

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."¹ Although when Jesus thought of Himself as the Son of man He claimed a more than human office, yet He saw His glory always through His abasement, and He thought of His divine functions in relation to the suffering of humanity.

It may be asked why it was this designation that Jesus particularly used. I think that it is probable that the phrase was less common as a designation of the Messiah than some others, and would not arouse such suspicion and resentment. It enabled Him to speak of the judgment and divine retribution in a manner which would carry conviction, and there were associations connected with the word which enabled it to express not only His divine prerogatives, but also His human sympathies. The word is used in St. John's Gospel in a way which interprets and develops these thoughts. Jesus is the Son of man which is in heaven, but it is the Son of man who is glorified in the Passion and Crucifixion.

When at the baptism Jesus is addressed as "the beloved in whom I am well pleased," a new idea is associated with the Messianic conception. The reference is clearly to a well-known passage of Isaiah: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him."² It is clear that Jesus thought of Himself as the Servant of Jehovah, whose miseries and sufferings are delineated in the latter part of the book of Isaiah, and it was on that book more than any other in the Old Testament that his conceptions were formed. When He first preached at Nazareth (St. Luke tells us) He read the passage beginning, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor,"³ and stated that that day was the Scripture fulfilled. He quoted the same passage in His answer to John the Baptist,⁴ and elsewhere it is the words of this book that have helped to fashion His language and mould His thought. But if, as is clear, He thought of Himself as the Servant, other ideas must inevitably come in. The Servant

¹ Lk. xix. 10.

² Is. xlii. 1.

³ Lk. iv. 18.

⁴ Mt. xi. 5; Lk. vii. 22.

suffered, and His sufferings were redemptive, and these ideas, therefore, must also have helped in fashioning His teaching. "That which was written had to be fulfilled in Him: And he was reckoned among the transgressors";¹ and when He said, "The Son of man hath not come to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many,"² he was no doubt thinking of such passages as "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: and he shall bear their iniquities."³ The original Messianic idea depicted a king and a conqueror, the apocalyptic dreamer thought of a divine Messiah pre-existent in heaven, but when Jesus reading with His clear and penetrating mind modelled His thoughts on the conception of the Servant of the Lord, new ideas came in of suffering, death, redemption, and the full meaning of the work of the Messiah began to be realized.

In the later days of the Apostolic Church, when the phraseology of Christianity began to adapt itself to Gentile ideas, one of the commonest designations of Jesus Christ was "the Lord." That was natural enough. It had a meaning which no other word could then have had. It was used alike of kingly and divine prerogatives, and was a common designation of the heathen gods. It was natural that the title, "the Son of man," which had no association outside Judaism, should give way to what had become a more expressive term. But "the Lord" was a term which also had its roots in Judaism,⁴ and was probably accepted by Jesus as part of the designation of the Messiah. When the Psalmist said "the Lord said unto my Lord," he may very probably have been designating an earthly ruler, but when the original meaning had been lost, it would be naturally associated with the Messiah, and I do not doubt that that is the origin of the expression "the Lord Messiah" which meets us in the Psalms of Solomon. The word "Lord" was addressed to Jesus, He is spoken of as the Lord, and the use

¹ Lk. xxii. 37.

² Mk. x. 45.

³ Is. liii. 11.

⁴ As a proof of the fact that the title Lord is not exclusively of Greek origin may be cited the words "Maran atha" (the Lord is at hand) (1 Cor. xvi. 22), which show that it was current in Aramaic.

of the term seems to hover between a title of courtesy and respect, and a fuller religious meaning. "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,"¹ and when Jesus asks, "if David in spirit calleth him Lord, how is he his Son?"² He is ascribing to the Messiah the functions of Lordship.

One of the commonest of the popular designations of the Messiah was Son of David. How did Jesus think of this? It was a term used in addressing Him. When the company of enthusiastic Galileans is marching to Jerusalem from Jericho on the final journey, blind Bartimaeus cries out to Him, "Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me,"³ and as Jesus enters into Jerusalem to declare Himself as Messiah, it is the kingdom of our father David⁴ that expresses the hopes of the people. No doubt that was what most men longed for. But Jesus never used the designation. It was not that he rejected the hopes of a new kingdom of David, or that He did not claim to fulfil them, but He believed that they would be fulfilled in quite a different way to what men had expected, and He could not use the term that was likely to be misleading. So He did not speak of Himself as the Son of David.

IV

It seems probable that there was among Jewish theologians much discussion about the Messiah. There was a desire to know when he would come, what his work and office would be, above all, how, when he came, his presence would be known, and how the true Messiah might be distinguished from false Messiahs. Knowing as we do the character of Jewish theology, we may suspect that the signs of the Messiah would largely consist of a number of external characteristics based very often on a doubtful exegesis. We have some instances of this in the New Testament. Herod enquires of the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah should be born, and they answer in Bethlehem of Judaea, basing their answer on the words of the prophet

¹ Mt. vii. 21.

² Mk. xii. 37.

³ Mk. x. 47.

⁴ Mk. xi. 10.

Micah. So the disciples coming down from the mountain after the Transfiguration are concerned because the scribes say that Elias must first come. Here was another sign of the Messiah which might be deduced from the words of Malachi. So again Jesus asks, How say the scribes that the Christ is the Son of David? No doubt there were many other signs of the Messiah discussed in learned circles.

It was natural that, in the early days of the Christian Church, the disciples who searched the Scriptures in order that they might show how they testified to the Christ should seek to prove that Jesus was the Messiah according to the correct methods of the time. This is just what St. Matthew, who was writing for Jewish Christians, does. He gives us a genealogy to prove a genuine Davidic descent. He describes and lays emphasis on the birth at Bethlehem, as a signal proof of Jesus' claims. He gives a number of incidents, all of which he represents as the literal fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Throughout the Gospel, whenever an opportunity seems to occur, he shows how the incident recorded had been foretold. The whole was for his readers a very convincing series of arguments.

To us they have not quite the same value. There is no reason for thinking that the facts may not have been in many cases as they are described. There is no improbability in Joseph and Mary being of the tribe of Judah, and reputed descendants of David, and genealogies among the Jews would be carefully preserved. The reason given by St. Luke for the birth at Bethlehem has been shown by recent discovery to be quite possible. Whether others of the birth stories are historical or not we cannot say. In some cases we certainly seem to be in the region of poetry and myth. Some of the passages of the Old Testament quoted are used in a way which would seem to us legitimate; in other cases we could not now justify the methods of exegesis. The words "out of Egypt have I called my son" certainly did not refer to the Messiah when they were first spoken. The voice that was heard in Ramah, and the weeping of Rachel, did not in Jeremiah refer to Bethlehem at all. In fact, while St. Matthew's argument would probably have seemed to many contemporaries convincing, it presents to modern

readers great difficulties. And the same might be said of much that we read in Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho the Jew and other patristic expositions of the Messianic claim.

I do not myself feel certain of the historical character of all the early stories about our Lord, and I am certain that a great deal of the exegesis is untenable, but I do not think we need really be troubled by either of these things, for what I want you to notice is how entirely absent from our Lord's teaching are any of these things. As has already been pointed out, His use of Scripture is quite different, and He never bases His claim on the fulfilment of conventional signs. He does, indeed, claim that John had fulfilled the prophecy about Elijah, but this was not a small point. It was part of the great spiritual movement which was consummated in Himself. He seems to doubt whether the claim that the Messiah was to be a Son of David gave an adequate explanation of the office, and He does not seek to fulfil conventional prophecies in a literal way. There is one very significant exception. When He enters Jerusalem to assert His claims as Messiah, He remembers the prophecy of Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass,"¹ and in this way He enters the holy city. It was a symbolism quite in accordance with the methods of the prophets. It might testify how different was this King to what the Jews had expected, how different His kingdom; lowliness, righteousness, salvation were to be the notes of His reign. It was a fitting prelude to the Passion. And it was characteristic of St. Matthew that the important point for him lay in a literal verbal fulfilment, the she-ass with the young colt running by her side.

The conception Jesus had of His office was far different from anything that people had imagined. He had, we have seen reason to believe, formed His mind (if we may venture to use the phrase) on a spiritual study of the word of God, the books of the Old Testament. They foretold (as almost

¹ Zech. ix. 9.

all men held) the coming of a Messiah, but when Jesus read them and pondered over them, it became very clear that the Messiah that they foretold was very different from what most people expected. He knew Himself the Messiah—when or how the conviction came to Him we cannot tell. It was certainly confirmed and completed in His baptism; and knowing Himself to be the Messiah, He felt that He was fulfilling all God's purpose in the Old Testament. He had come to fulfil all righteousness. He was not come to destroy but to fulfil. So He thought of Himself as fulfilling all the lines of hope of the Old Testament. He was, indeed, the King of the house of David, but the kingdom which He would found was to be a kingdom of righteousness. That was what the prophets taught Him. What an ideal vision of the future had they seen! "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."¹ He thought of Himself as Lord, but His rule was in the hearts of His followers. They would not fulfil His purpose by calling Him Lord, but by doing the will of the Father. He thought of Himself as the Son of God, but it meant not only an honorific title of the Messiah, but an intimate union between Himself and God, of which He was conscious. He thought of Himself as the Son of man; it implied lofty claims, for Daniel had seen the vision of the Son of man coming to the Ancient of Days, but He connected it also with His life on earth, His humiliations and suffering. He thought of Himself as the Servant of the Lord, and that meant beneficent work for God among men, but also suffering and death for Himself in the fulfilment of His ministry, and redemption through death. These do not exhaust His conception of His office, but they all harmonize with the fulfilment of everything that was most spiritual in the Old Testament.

For there were in the Old Testament many and various elements, and at different times in the history of Israel different aspects had been prominent. The remarkable thing is that all alike seem to be summed up in Christ, and that so naturally and spontaneously that we hardly realize the origin of the picture. Dr. Sanday has expressed this

¹ Ezek. xviii. 31.

admirably in one of the most eloquent and luminous passages of his *Bampton Lectures on Inspiration*. "We turn the page," he writes, "which separates the New Testament from the Old. We look at the Figure which is delineated there, and we find in it a most marvellous meeting of traits derived from the most different and distant sources, from Nathan, from Amos, from First Isaiah, from Second Isaiah, from Zechariah, from Daniel, from the second Psalm, from the twenty-second, from the sixty-ninth, from the hundred and tenth. And these traits do not meet, as we might expect them to do, in some laboured and artificial compound, but in the sweet and gracious figure of Jesus of Nazareth—King, but not as men count kingship; crowned, but with the crown of thorns; suffering for our redemption, but suffering only that he may reign."¹

V

We have now completed some portion of our task, and may pause to review our progress. We have set out to describe the life and teaching of Jesus the Christ. We recognize that it is a task of grave difficulty, that many have attempted it, and that although all may have achieved something, all have failed. All we can hope is that we, too, may have achieved something. Our purpose was to construct a life on the basis of the material before us, without presuppositions either positive or negative; not to assume what Christian tradition has taught about Jesus, but not to deny it. The one presupposition that we have allowed ourselves is that we must be able to account for the fact of Christianity. A religion of such universal spiritual significance could not be the result of astral fancies or any such thing. Our method has been to construct our story out of our material, primary and secondary, as we might do in secular history, and then consider whether we have succeeded in producing a coherent and consistent narrative.

Our first business is with the life itself. The narrative of St. Mark, studied without presuppositions, seems to give us a story, both probable in itself and one that harmonizes

¹ *Inspiration*, by W. Sanday, D.D., pp. 404, 405.

with what we know of the circumstances of the time and country. Both in St. Luke and St. Matthew the probable sequence of events seems to have been somewhat disturbed, but the further material that they have given us will generally, if not always, fit into the rest of the story. The Gospel of St. John will demand further examination, but it seems to preserve independent tradition of considerable value. The history, as so far constructed, I would put before you as giving an account of the life of Jesus as it may well have happened—an account I would submit, at any rate, more probable than some others which begin by casting doubts on the credibility of their source.

But there is one particular historical phenomenon, which demands separate investigation—the question of miracles. Here, again, I started without assuming either that they had occurred or that they could not have occurred. I assumed that there might be spiritual phenomena inconsistent with ordinary experience—that is to say, I did not rule them out on *a priori* grounds. What I would suggest to you as the result of our examination is that these miracles of the Gospel harmonize with the rest of the picture of the work of Christ. They are restrained; they are beneficent; they are not made the main purpose of the ministry; they rather take their place as something characteristic but subordinate; they exhibit the same spiritual authority and power as the words and work of Jesus. They are in keeping with the rest of the narrative. I must leave it to each person to decide whether he feels compelled to eliminate them on grounds clearly other than critical.

The most important part of our investigation was the teaching of Jesus, and here the relation of our sources is somewhat different. Our information comes from a wider field. We have at least four different collections of the words of Jesus—St. Mark, *The Discourses*, a collection of sayings and parables in St. Luke, a considerable amount of material in St. Matthew. All these collections seem to present to us the teaching of our Lord, as it was preserved in the first Christian generation. Occasionally there might seem to be later elements, but for the most part it is homogeneous in character. There are few, if any, signs of

successive strata of teaching or of development of doctrine. On the basis of that material, with occasional illustrations from St. John's Gospel, we have attempted to construct the teaching of Jesus about the Christian life, the kingdom of heaven, and the conception of the Messiah. We have found a remarkable consistency in these presentations. In the first place, there is not in this teaching any sign of anachronisms. In the language, in the categories of thought, in the problems that it discusses, it fits in with all that we know of the ideas and aspirations of the time. We tried to reconstruct the education of Jesus, the influences to which He must have been subject in His home in Galilee, and we saw how in its form and presentation the teaching exactly corresponded to these circumstances.

And then as to its content. While it is throughout derived from, and based on, the Old Testament, it represents a most remarkable transformation of that material. It seizes on and develops its most spiritual ideas, and puts on one side everything that is temporary and inadequate. It makes the whole of life dependent on the fulfilment of the will of God, and the right attitude of the devout soul to God. It makes faith and love the central fact in the Christian life. It looks upon the kingdom of God as the ideal for man, and sees in the kingdom of God the fulfilment of God's will and righteousness. All these things come from the Old Testament. Some few had found this or that rule of life, but in Jesus they mean the transformation of all human life.

Jesus was the Messiah. As such He fulfilled all that the Old Testament had to teach, but He always transcended it. As the Son of God He lived in intimate union with the Father. As the Servant of God He fulfilled God's will on earth. As the Son of man He was the Judge of mankind.

Our task is only half completed, but I would suggest to you that there is a homogeneity and consistency about the life and the teaching, which we cannot but look upon as a strong proof of authenticity; and the teaching bears the impress of a single mind. I do not mean to say that that would be true of everything in the Gospels. If Jesus had once taught in a particular way, those who heard Him, and

those who heard of Him, might construe and interpret that teaching as, indeed, the author of the fourth Gospel seems to have done. What I do mean is, that the teaching of Jesus, as contained in the Gospels, is not a collection of different opinions held by various individuals during a period of from fifty to seventy years, but a homogeneous whole coming from one teacher of intense spiritual power. What further this may imply we must leave to the sequel of our investigation.

NOTE ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE GOSPELS

THE chronology of the life of our Lord is a subject on which it is not possible at present to arrive at conclusions which will be universally accepted. The data are few, and it is not easy to reconcile them. The limits of variation, indeed, are not great; but the construction of an exact and certain chronology, such as is so great a help to sound history, is not yet possible. In these notes I have taken as my starting-point Dr. Turner's article on "Chronology" in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* (vol. i., pp. 403 ff.)—although I do not always agree with his conclusions—and the detailed information in Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*.

I. THE DATE OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS.—The birth of Jesus was:

(1) During the reign of Herod the Great. On this all authorities agree. That is, it was before the Passover of the year 4 B.C. Probably, also, it was, as the narrative in St. Matthew suggests, some little time before, not less than two years.

(2) According to St. Luke, about thirty years before the beginning of His ministry. This took place some time after the summer of A.D. 28, and perhaps early in A.D. 30. The word "about" gives us considerable latitude, and side by side with it must be placed the tradition given by Irenaeus on the authority of the elders that Jesus was above forty years old at the time of His death (Iren., *Adv. Haer.*, II., xxxiii. 4).

(3) According to St. Luke, at the time of a census. This was a census of the whole Roman Empire, ordered by Augustus, the first of a series, and carried out in Syria by Quirinius. 'This was the first enrolment made while Quirinius was Governor of Syria (Lk. ii. 2).'

To discuss the many difficulties raised by this verse would need more than one dissertation. It will be sufficient for us to concentrate our attention on certain leading points.

(i.) There was quite certainly a census held by Quirinius in A.D. 6, when Archelaus was deposed, and it has been held that the introduction of this date is a blunder of St. Luke, probably based on a careless reading of Josephus.

(ii.) In St. Luke's narrative we must distinguish carefully between the fact of the census and the date. The former is supported by the narrative, the latter may be only a mistaken attempt at fixing the chronology. If that is the explanation,

the deduction that I would draw is that St. Luke had not read Josephus; if he had done so, he would probably have avoided the error.

(iii.) Discoveries of papyri made in Egypt have thrown much light on the census in the Roman Empire. It has been shown that the story contained in St. Luke was probable and, in particular, that it was the custom to summon people to their own homes to be enrolled. The census, as later evidence shows, was held systematically at intervals of fifteen years, and if there was one held in A.D. 6-7, then there may have been one held in 9-8 B.C.

(iv.) Tertullian tells us there was a census held in Judaea under C. Senti Saturninus, who was Governor of Syria about 9-6 B.C. (Tertullian, *Adv. Marcionem*, iv. 19).

(v.) The tendency, therefore, of recent discovery is, on the whole, perhaps to corroborate the suggestion of Lewin (*Fasti Sacri*, p. xxiii ff., 115) and of Dr. Turner (*op. cit.*, p. 405), that the Nativity took place at the time of the first census of Palestine, held under Saturninus, in 8-6 B.C. St. Luke, then, is right as to the fact, but wrong as to the name of the Governor—quite a possible mistake.

(vi.) But we have not quite done with Quirinius. There is considerable evidence that he was twice Governor of Syria, and in that capacity carried on a campaign against the Homonadenses some time before the mission of Gaius Caesar to the East. This earlier Governorship is placed by Schürer and Mommsen in 3-2 B.C., but Sir William Ramsay has produced considerable evidence, based on more recent discoveries, to show that the campaign against the Homonadenses—and, therefore, the first governorship of Quirinius—should be placed earlier. He may, then, have been Governor between 6 and 8 B.C., at the time of a census, or more probably held a special command, which would account for St. Luke putting the census under Quirinius and Tertullian remembering the name of Saturninus. We had better, on this matter, suspend our judgment, and await further discovery.

The conclusion of this argument is that the Nativity was probably about 8 B.C., or perhaps, recognizing the possibility of delay in carrying out the census, we might place it, with Dr. Turner, in 7 B.C. Lewin's date of 6 B.C. is probably too late.

2. THE BEGINNING OF THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—St. Luke gives a series of synchronisms for this event. "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" (Lk. iii. 1).

The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar is almost

the only fixed and definite date given in the New Testament. It was counted from August 19, A.D. 28, to August 19, A.D. 29. Difficulties have been raised, however.

(i.) It has been suggested (as by Dr. Turner in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, i. 405) that the years of his reign were computed from the time when he was associated with Augustus (A.D. 11 or 12), and not from the latter's death. But while there is no instance of computation from this date, that from the actual succession is well known and occurs on coins of the eastern provinces, and, in particular, on coins of Palestine (see Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, p. liii; Hill, *Coins of Palestine in the British Museum*, pp. 251-260). It must be remembered that the Western system of dating by the years of Tribunician power must have been quite meaningless in the East, and the substitution of the regnal year was natural.

(ii.) It has been affirmed that the date refers not to the beginning of the Baptist's ministry, but to the year in which he baptized our Lord. This, however, is quite contrary to St. Luke's statement, which is that in this year the word of the Lord came to John.

(iii.) It has further been asked, On what evidence did St. Luke arrive at this very exact date? And is he accurate? The first question we cannot answer, but it is probable that he had some definite information. As to the second, it is possible that St. Luke was mistaken; but when a careful historian who wrote not fifty years afterwards and clearly shows abundant evidence of enquiry gives us a fixed date, we should accept it unless proof of its incorrectness can be produced.

3. THE LENGTH OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.—I cannot think that this was less than three years. The attempt to compress it within a year seems to me contrary to the evidence and to probability.

(i.) The Galilaean ministry requires, I think, not less than two years. There were probably at least two full circuits of preaching in Galilee which would, it may be held, take place during the summer months (see p. 208).

(ii.) The feeding of the multitude took place, according to St. John, about the time of the Passover (Jn. vi. 4). This statement is corroborated by St. Mark, who tells us that they sat down on the green grass (Mk. vi. 39). This would only be possible in the early spring.

(iii.) This was followed by a long tour through the districts of Tyre, Sidon, and the Decapolis, which probably lasted most of the summer. It ends with the confession at Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration. This must have taken place before the winter, when the slopes of Hermon would be covered with snow.

(iv.) The final journey to Jerusalem was probably during the autumn of this year.

4. THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—Josephus (*Antt.*, xviii., § 116) tells us that the Jews thought that the defeat of Herod Antipas by Aretas was a judgment upon him for the execution of John the Baptist. The defeat was probably, therefore, not very long after the death of John.

This defeat was probably not later than the year A.D. 33. We are told that it was caused by the bad conduct of a contingent from the Tetrarchy of Philip (*ibid.*, § 114). It occurred, therefore, probably before the death of Philip, which took place during the twentieth year of Tiberius (between August 19, 33, and August 19, 34). It may have been as early as A.D. 32, and the death of John may have taken place during the winter 31-32, so that news of it would come to Jesus shortly before the feeding of the multitude.

5. THE DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION.—The Crucifixion took place:

(i.) During the Governorship of Pontius Pilate—*i.e.*, between A.D. 27 and 37.

(ii.) When Caiaphas was high priest—that is, before A.D. 36.

(iii.) In a year when the Passover fell either on a Thursday or Friday. We cannot be more precise. The computation of the date of the Passover is a problem for the expert, and they seem agreed that the three possible years are A.D. 29, 30, and 33. If the conclusions reached above are correct, 29 and 30 are too early, and 33 remains—a year which harmonizes sufficiently with the other data.

6. The approximate dates, then, for the ministry of Jesus are:

A.D. 28-29	..	..	Preaching of John the Baptist.
„ 29-30	..	..	The Baptism of Jesus.
„ 30	..	..	Imprisonment of John the Baptist.
			The Galilaean Ministry.
„ 31	..	..	The Galilaean Ministry.
„ 31-32	..	..	Death of John the Baptist.
„ 32	Spring		Feeding of the Multitude.
			Retreat to Tyre and Sidon.
			Journey to Jerusalem.
„ 33	..	..	Passover.
			The Crucifixion.

NOTES ON THE CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE (p. 322)

¹ The years of Herod seem to have been counted from 1 January or 1 Nisan, 37 B.C.

² The reign of Augustus seems always to have been calculated in Syria from 31 B.C., the Battle of Actium, "the year of victory," and its years began on September 2.

³ "Nihil ad veterem et patriciam Sulpiciorum familiam Quirinius pertinuit, ortus apud municipium Lanuvium: sed impiger militae, et acribus ministeriis, consulatum sub D. Augusto, mox expugnatis per Ciliciam Homonadensium castellis, insignia triumphi adeptus, datusque rector C. Caesari, Armeniam obtinenti."—*Tac. Ann.* iii. 48.

⁴ Lustrum solus feci Censorino et Asinio coss.—*Monumentum Ancyranum*.

⁵ This was the first year of Archelaus, of Herod Antipas, and of Philip. Presumably the year began with their succession about April 1, and not from their recognition by Augustus.

⁶ The years of Tiberius in Syria, and probably the East generally, appear to have been calculated from his actual succession, as we know from synchronisms on coins of Herod Antipas and elsewhere.

B.C.	A.U.C.	Years of Herod.	Years of Augustus	Roman History.	Province of Syria.
12	742	26 ¹	19 ²	P. Sulpicius Quirinius, Consul. ³	—
11	743	27	20	—	—
10	744	28	21	—	M. Titius (?)
9	745	29	22	Census year of Empire (?)	P. Sulpicius Quirinius (?) Campaign against Homonadenses ⁴
8	746	30	23	Census at Rome under Augustus completed. ⁴	C. Sentius Saturninus (9-6)
7	747	31	24	—	—
6	748	32	25	—	P. Quintilius Varus (6-4).
5	749	33	26	—	—
4	750	34	27	—	—
		<i>Year of Herod Antipas</i> 1 ^b			
3	751	2	28	—	—
2	752	3	29	Mission of Gaius to the East.	—
1	753	4	30	—	Gaius Caesar (to A.D. 4).
A.D. 1	754	5	31	—	—
2	755	6	32	Death of Lucius Caesar.	—
3	756	7	33	—	—
4	757	8	34	Death of Gaius Caesar.	L. Volusius Saturninus (4-5)
5	758	9	35	—	—
6	759	10	36	Census year of Empire (?)	P. Sulpicius Quirinius for the second time.
7	760	11	37	—	—
8	761	12	38	—	—
9	762	13	39	Defeat of Varus in Germany.	—
10	763	14	40	—	—
11	764	15	41	—	—
12	765	16	42	—	Q. Caecilius Creticus Silanus
13	766	17	43	—	—
14	767	18	44	Death of AUGUSTUS (Aug. 19). Accession of TIBERIUS.	—
		<i>Year of Tiberius</i> 1 ^b			
15	768	19	2	—	—
16	769	20	3	—	—
17	770	21	4	—	Cn. Calpurnius Piso (17-19).
18	771	22	5	a —	—
19	772	23	6	Death of Germanicus.	Cn. Sentius Saturninus (19-21).
20	773	24	7	—	—
21	774	25	8	—	—
22	775	26	9	—	—
23	776	27	10	Death of Drusus.	—
24	777	28	11	—	—
25	778	29	12	—	—
26	779	30	13	—	—
27	780	31	14	—	—
28	781	32	15	—	—
29	782	33	16	Death of Livia.	—
30	783	34	17	—	—
31	784	35	18	Death of Sejanus.	—
32	785	36	19	—	L. Aelius Lamia (until 32). L. Pomponius Flaccus (32-35).
33	786	37	20	—	—
34	787	38	21	—	—
35	788	39	22	—	L. Vitellius (35-39).
36	789	40	23	—	Treaty between Rome and Parthia.
37	790	41	24	DEATH OF TIBERIUS (March 16).	—

TABLE

<i>Palestine.</i>	<i>High Priests.</i>	<i>Christian History.</i>	<i>B.C.</i>
Herod visits Rome.	Simon, son of Boethos	—	12
Dedication of Caesarea.	— [(24-5 B.C.).	—	11
Herod's Third Visit to Rome(?)	—	—	10
—	—	—	9
—	—	—	8
Murder of Alexander and Aristobulus.	—	NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST.	7
—	— [Ius (5-4).	—	6
Murder of Antipater.	Matthias, son of Theophi-	—	5
Death of HEROD (April 1).	Joseph, son of Ellem.	—	4
Accession of Archelaus, Anti-	Joazar, son of Boethos.	—	
pas and Philip.			
—	Eleazar, son of Boethos.	—	
—	—	—	3
—	—	—	2
—	—	—	1
—	Jesus, son of Sec (?)	—	A.D.
—	—	—	1
—	—	—	2
—	Joazar, son of Boethos	—	3
—	(the second time).	—	
Banishment of Archelaus	Annas, son of Sethi (6-15).	—	4
Census in Judaea		—	5
Coponius Procurator.		—	6
—	—	—	7
—	—	—	8
M. Ambibulus.	—	—	9
Death of Salome, sister of	—	—	10
— [Herod.	—	—	11
Annius Rufus.	—	—	12
—	—	—	13
—	—	—	14
—	—	—	
Valerius Gratus.	Ismael, son of Phaibi.	—	15
—	Eleazar, son of Annas.	—	16
—	Simon, son of Kamithos.	—	17
—	Joseph Caiaphas (18-36).	—	18
—	—	—	19
—	—	—	20
—	—	—	21
—	—	—	22
—	—	—	23
—	—	—	24
—	—	—	25
Pontius Pilate.	—	—	26
Herod Antipas builds Tiberias.	—	—	
—	—	—	27
—	—	—	28
—	—	JOHN THE BAPTIST.	
Herod meets Herodias.	—	—	29
His wife flees to her father.	—	Baptism of Jesus.	
—	—	Arrest of John.	30
—	—	The Galilaean Ministry.	
—	—	The Galilaean Ministry.	31
—	—	Death of John.	
War between Herod and Aretas.	—	Feeding of the Multitude.	32
—	—	Journey to Tyre and Sidon.	
—	—	Last Journey to Jerusalem.	
Death of Philip the Tetrarch.	—	THE CRUCIFIXION (April 3).	33
—	—	—	34
—	—	—	35
Banishment of Pontius Pilate.	Vitellius deposes Calaphas.	—	36
Expedition of Vitellius	—	—	37
against Aretas stopped by			
death of Tiberius.			

NOTES ON THE MAP OF PALESTINE

THE political divisions of Palestine at the time of our Lord, starting from the north, were as follows:

I. THE COUNTRY OF THE ITURAEANS.—The Ituraeans were a warlike mountain tribe, the nucleus of whose territory was the mountains of the Lebanon and the plain of Marsyas. The limits varied considerably. At one time it had included a considerable part of Galilee, and had stretched to the south-east to Trachonitis.

At this time it was divided into four portions:

(1) The northern part of the plain of Marsyas towards Laodicea. This was governed, after A.D. 38, by a certain Soemus. What was its position at this time we do not know.

(2) The southern part of this plain with its capital, Chalcis. This was granted in A.D. 41 to Herod, grandson of Herod the Great, and brother of Agrippa I.

(3) The district of Abilene, with its capital Abila, to the east towards Damascus on the upper waters of the Barada or Chrysorrhoas, the river of Damascus. At this time it was ruled by a Tetrarch of the name of Lysanias, as is correctly stated by St. Luke (iii. 1). In A.D. 41 it was granted by Claudius to Agrippa I.

(4) The southern portion, called the House of Zenodorus, formed part of the dominions of Philip (see below).

2. THE TERRITORY OF THE PHOENICIAN AND GREEK CITIES ON THE COAST: SIDON, TYRE, AND PTOLEMAIS.—How large the territory of these cities was we have no correct knowledge, but Josephus tells us that Mount Carmel belonged to Tyre, and if his statement that the northern boundary of Galilee was the territory of Tyre be correct, it must have stretched a considerable distance inland.

3. THE TETRARCHY OF PHILIP.—This was really that portion of the dominions of Herod the Great which had formerly belonged to Zenodorus, and was called the House of Zenodorus (see Josephus, *Antt.*, xv. 342-364; xvii. 189, 319; xviii. 106; *B.J.* 398, 399). It included the southern part of the territory of the Ituraeans, with the district called Paneas; Batanea, the ancient Bashan or, rather, a portion of it, the country round Ashtaroth and Edrei; Trachonitis, the rugged lava country to the north towards Damascus; Auranitis, the modern Hauran, the rich corn-growing country to the south; and Gaulanitis, the country on the eastern

bank of Jordan, south of Paneas. Within this area there were, however, certain districts belonging to the Greek cities of the Decapolis, which were not under Philip's jurisdiction. Its limits to the south are fixed by the fact that the towns of Bosra and Salcha belonged to the Nabataeans.

4. THE TETRARCHY OF ANTIPAS.—This consisted of the territories of Galilee and Peraea. Galilee was, according to Josephus (*B.J.*, iii. 35-38), bounded on the west by Ptolemais and Carmel; on the south by Samaria and Scythopolis; on the east by the territories of Hippos and Gadara, and by Gaulanitis; on the north by Tyre and the country of the Tyrians. It extended to the southern edge of the plain of Esdraelon.

Peraea, in its full size, was all the country beyond Jordan between the Yarmuk and the Arnon, but a considerable part of this belonged to cities of the Decapolis. Josephus describes it (*B.J.*, iii. 46, 47) as bounded on the north by Pella, and on the east by the territories of Gerasa and Philadelphia and the Arabians. Its most southern town was Machaerus.

5. THE DECAPOLIS.—This was a league of Greek cities, each with its separate territory forming enclaves in the different districts; but between Galilee and Peraea they were contiguous and covered a considerable stretch of country. They were Scythopolis or Bethshan on the western bank of Jordan; Hippos, Gadara, and Pella on the eastern bank. Further inland were Abila, Dium, Gerasa, and Philadelphia on the eastern boundary of Peraea. Raphana and Kanatha were in the territory of Philip, and Damascus to the north.

6. THE ROMAN PROVINCE, under the direct rule of the Procurators, consisting of *Samaria*, *Judaea*, and *Idumaea*. The Greek town of Gaza was, however, a free city; and the revenues of Jamnia, Azotus, and Phasaelis were the property of Salome, the sister of Herod, and then, after her death, of Livia. They were, however, for political purposes under the Procurators.

7. THE KINGDOM OF THE NABATAEANS.—Its capital was Petra; it appears to have extended all along the eastern border of Palestine, and at times, Damascus, in order probably to protect itself from attacks of Ituraeans, was under its protection or suzerainty.

THE JOURNEYS OF OUR LORD

We have not sufficient data to trace these with any accuracy. Besides short journeys to different places on the Sea of Galilee, there were probably—

(i.) Two longer circuits through Galilee. During these He visited, besides Nazareth, Nain and a place called Cana.

(ii.) Journeys across the lake to Gerasa, or Gergesa, and to Bethsaida.

(iii.) A long journey through the territories of Tyre, Sidon, and part of the Decapolis. This must have implied a considerable circuit through the mountainous region to the north.

(iv.) Journeys to Jerusalem—how many we cannot say. Both St. John and St. Luke are evidence that He passed through Samaria, and almost certainly on two different journeys. He also, probably on one occasion at least, travelled by the road through Peraea. Whether there was a full Peraean ministry may be doubted.

In the accompanying map the divisions of territory have been marked very roughly, so as to avoid the impression that we have accurate knowledge. It is, of course, impossible to fix the limits of the different city states, or to represent with any correctness the way in which they existed as enclaves in the surrounding territory. The journeys of our Lord are also largely conjectural, but it is possible to bring out the significance of the long journey through the territories of Tyre and Sidon and the Decapolis.

THE ROADS

At this period the roads of Palestine would be of two classes. There would be connecting every town and village the old native tracks, varying in character according to the nature of the soil, similar to the roads which exist at the present day where Western methods have not been introduced, but probably better cared for than under Turkish rule. They would be suitable for walking or riding, but not well fitted for wheeled traffic.

There would be, secondly, the great international highways. They would probably, by this time, have become under Roman influence well-built paved roads. It would be along such a road that the Ethiopian eunuch was driving in his chariot (Acts viii. 28).

The main roads would be:

1. The great maritime road from Egypt. This seems to have followed the coast, a few miles inland, until it reached Mt. Carmel, where it turned further into the country and, passing by Megiddo, reached the plain of Esdraelon. Here it divided into three. One branch turned again to the coast and went on to the Phoenician cities. A second, to the right, passed Scythopolis, or Bethshan, and so crossed the Jordan. Between the two a third branch went over the hills to the Sea of Galilee, and then by Caesarea Philippi to Damascus.

2. Roads from Jerusalem:

- (a) To Lydda and Joppa.

- (b) To Jericho and across Jordan.

- (c) North to Shechem (Neapolis), Samaria (Sebaste), and so to the plain of Esdraelon and Galilee.

3. A road from Ptolemais inland to the Sea of Galilee, and from there onwards to Damascus on one side and the cities of Decapolis on the other.

4. There seem to have been roads running north on both sides of the Jordan valley, which were probably continued on both sides of the Sea of Galilee.

5. From Damascus south two great roads ran, one to Caesarea Philippi described above, the other—the Pilgrims' Road—running through the Hauran as far as Philadelphia (Rabbath-Ammon), and from there to the Jordan by Jericho.

The best accounts of the roads of Palestine are those by Sir George Adam Smith in his *Historical Geography of Palestine*, and in an article on "Trade and Commerce" in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, vol. iv.

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MAP OF
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